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UNITED STRATEGY

THE Russian thaw has begun. From Leningrad to the Donetz, the biggest puddles in the world impede movement. Soon they will be drying; and the Russians, looking at their achievements, their resources; looking at the toughening of their own armies and the disappointments of the German, assert with more confidence than ever that this spring and summer will be theirs, and not Hitler's. It is true that all along the front the Germans, at very great cost, have been able to hang on to advanced fortified positions which they may hope to use as the springboards of their offensive. That is a dangerous fact; so is the Russian failure to free Leningrad or the Crimea. But it is equally true that the approaches to these German springboards are dangerously narrow for the German supply columns, and that Russian troops and material that might have been expended in their reduction are still intact, fresh and mobile. The Russian High Command has given the world such proof of its power to conceive, co-ordinate and execute a grand strategy.

A survey of the Anglo-American sectors is very much less reassuring. The return of Laval to power at Vichy is a sinister portent. The Germans are boasting that he will co-ordinate the French fleet with theirs: at the least he is likely to give them a free route to the African front through France and Tunis. He is at the head of the French Government—for Marshal Pétain is scarcely more than a wailing ghost. Darlan remains in command of the French forces, and he and Laval detest each other; but that feud between thieves is little enough for honest men to pin their hopes to.

But it is not individual items of bad news from Europe or the Bay of Bengal that are the principal cause of public uneasiness. Even the gravest defeats—military, naval or political—can sometimes be accepted as inevitable setbacks in the progress of a strategic design. The plaguey fact about the present situation is that a well-co-ordinated strategic design on the part of the United Nations is not apparent at all, and such evidence of the British plan as does appear is not such as to impress either "the man in the street," the House of Commons, or—it is evident—our Allies, as effective.

That co-ordination is lacking is only too clear from the fact that the Russians should at intervals publicly renew their appeals for offensive action in the West. The Russian commanders apparently believe that offensive action can contribute to the defeat of Hitler this year. London may have valid reasons against this view; if so only a deplorable lack of co-ordination can prevent them being made plain to the Russians in the sort of joint staff conversations which ought to have been in progress for months. Can nothing even now be done to remove the dangerous barrier of distrust that exists, for reasons that should no longer be operative, between Britain and the U.S.S.R.?

The utterances of British statesmen still suggest a continuance in high places of the perilous theory that "with time on our side" we can afford to treat 1942 as a year in which Britain and America are still only assembling their forces for decisive action at some later date. In the meantime the impression is given that this defensive strategy means, in effect, an attempt to defend every exposed point on the world front at the same time, with resources which in the process get dispersed so thinly that at point after point they are overwhelmed. It is dangerous to go on talking about the vastly greater resources of the Democracies when every day they are diminished by an enemy which understands modern methods of war and in particular knows, for purposes of political warfare, how to exploit the weakness of an Empire in which subject races resent an old-established domination.

The American press has suggested that General Marshall's visit to London is the outcome of President Roosevelt's determination to persuade the British authorities of the urgency and possibility of a second front in Europe now. Dismissing this as an irresponsible over-simplification, it is reasonable to suppose that at least General Marshall purposes to discover the military difficulties, and if possible, to find how far they can be overcome. He has arrived at a moment when the question whether there is something radically wrong with the whole machinery of our strategic control has become a political issue as serious as was, not many weeks ago, the same question in relation to the control and direction of our industrial production. American experts may be more alert to the need of full military co-operation and a unified strategy than the British; we call attention to a book, reputed here to be a best seller in the United States, which is just published here with the title of *Defence will not win the war*, by W. F. Kernan, a lieutenant-colonel in the U.S. Army (Heinemann, 6s.). It is a forcible pamphlet which argues, amongst other things, for a land offensive in Italy.

Sir Edward Grigg's article in the *Times* calling for the creation of a Great General Staff and the appointment of a "non-political" Chief of Great General Staff, has already won the most powerful support—and the publication of the article itself, backed by the *Times* editorial columns, was sufficient evidence of the strength of the agitation in this sense already in progress behind the scenes. The announcement that Lord Louis Mountbatten already occupied the post of Director of Combined Operations has naturally set people asking whether, if such a post is regarded as necessary and possible for Commando operations, it is not equally necessary and possible for the direction of the total armed forces of the Empire.

The problem—nominally one of organisational method—is in fact a political issue because of its repercussions upon the position of the Prime Minister and Minister of Defence. When the demand for a Ministry of Production was first raised, Mr. Churchill apparently believed that such a post was an impossibility because it would disastrously interfere with his own functions as the supreme director of the total war effort. He resisted the demand up to the moment where it became apparent that the country and the House

felt so seriously the need for a better co-ordination of production that they would be prepared to dispense even with the Prime Minister himself if that was the only means by which the co-ordination could be achieved. It remains to be seen whether the same process will repeat itself on the issue of the direction and control of strategy.

The Budget

How has the Chancellor of the Exchequer faced this situation? Rightly, he has directed his main attention not to collecting revenue as such, but rather to restricting real expenditure. The heavy new taxes on beer, spirits, wines, tobacco, entertainments and luxury goods generally, are entirely proper, under conditions which make it criminal to waste labour and materials—which mean shipping space—on non-essentials, beyond the very modest allowance for making life tolerable after a hard day's work. It may be argued that the Government is fully able directly to limit the supply of all these commodities without raising their prices, and that this would be the better way. But there are real difficulties in the way of rationing this range of goods, even under a points system; and rationing could easily lead to the growth of a Black Market. Incidentally, the restrictions on restaurant meals are also thoroughly desirable, and link up with the Budget policy, though, as Lord Woolton says, they will not in fact save a great deal of food. The good side of the Budget is the heavy penalisation of luxury spending: the dubious side is that the "gap" is still left uncomfortably large. We regret that the principle of "family allowances," already acknowledged in our Budgets should not have been extended.

For the rest, the changes in the collection of income tax on wages seem good as far as they go, though we are surprised to find that the idea of collecting the tax on current earnings had to be given up. The increased allowance for wives' earned income was necessary in order to put an end to a highly deterrent tax on an essential form of employment. The Chancellor has not given in completely to a demand for a reduction of E.P.T.; we should have preferred the sum to be used for capital development after the war to have been retained in the State's hands, in order to give a better control over its use in connection with planned economic development supervised by a National Planning Authority. In general, the Budget is neither bad nor very good. It was out of the question to close the "gap" except by methods which would have so seriously upset the class system that the present Government would be clearly incapable of standing for them. If that limitation be excepted, there was not a great deal to be done beyond taxing superfluous expenditure as heavily as public opinion would be likely to accept.

Home Front *(by an Industrial Correspondent)*.

Sir William Beveridge is said to be making good speed with his plans for fuel rationing; and the Board of Trade is also busy on the proposed scheme for the reorganisation of the coal mines, under a body representing the Government, the owner, and the Mineworkers' Federation. Both schemes will be anxiously scrutinised. Fuel is not, like food, a commodity which can be rationed, with only a limited number of exceptions, at so much per head of the population, if only because people live in houses of very different sizes. Large rooms cannot be heated with the same fuel expenditure as small ones: central heating plants simply go out if they are given less than a certain amount to burn; and people who are away from home all day do not need the same amounts of fuel as people who work at home or are for other reasons, such as illness or old age, mostly at home. In a rationing scheme covering all kinds of fuel, some sort of points system will presumably have to be adopted; and it is to be presumed that consumers who do not use slot-machines will have to learn to read their meters regularly. Whether the household which exhausts its ration will be simply cut off remains to be seen. If so, there will probably be trouble where more than one family is living in a house and using a common supply, and with billeted persons who like a nice fire in their bedrooms. Indeed, I can see quite a lot of trouble in the offing, and am waiting to see how Sir William Beveridge proposes to deal with the problems which defeated attempts to make a workable plan early in the war.

* * *

The proposals for reorganising the coal industry will also come in for close scrutiny. I confess I do not much like the idea of handing the industry over to a council predominantly representing miners and owners. The Mineworkers' Federation, though its leaders would prefer public ownership, has been pressing for this as a second best and appears to have got the endorsement of the Labour Party and the Trade Union Congress. But will a plan of "joint control," even if representatives of the State are included on the proposed council, be likely to work efficiently? The owners, and to a smaller extent the miners, have hitherto shown themselves pretty recalcitrant to proposals for effective public control and combination. The owners have had the successive schemes for coal distribution from the pits pretty much in their own hands, having been allowed to appoint their own men as regional coal officers. Nor, on the miners' side, have the joint pit committees been very effective in dealing with the problem of output. It is true that the large amount of absenteeism must be attributed principally to the high average age of the men now working in the pits and to the fact that the number of working days required is now greater than it was before the war. But even so the position is far from satisfactory, and the fall in production is more serious at present than the difficulty of transport. The miners allege that in some areas the owners have been deliberately working the less productive seams in order to keep the better ones for after the war. How widespread this grievance is, or how fully justified, no outsider can say; but the entire situation seems to point to the need of an *external* control designed to overhaul the industry in an impartial, war-winning spirit, rather than to the likelihood of success attending a system of joint control by the two sides, which have never shown in the past any ability to pull effectively together. Mr. Dalton, within whose jurisdiction the Mines Department lies, is showing a commendable activity in many fields as a new broom. I hope he will not be deterred from cleaning up the coal situation really thoroughly by any fear of offending either side of the industry—or by the fact that the Labour Party and the Trade Union Congress, feeling unable to press for public ownership (Why are they unable to press for it?), are apparently supporting the very dubious project of "joint control."

* * *

The threatened miners' strike at Point of Air has been averted—or at any rate notices have been withdrawn in order that discussions may be resumed and, if necessary, an investigation held. The point at issue is the continuance at this particular colliery of a "company union" and the owners' refusal to have any dealings with the Mineworkers' Federation. After 1926, "company unions" became popular with certain sections of the mineowners, notably in the East Midlands and South Wales. But these have all been gradually liquidated, except the local "company union" at this particular colliery, which is rather isolated and belongs to a relatively weak area from the standpoint of organisation. It seems clear that this local "union" can serve no useful purpose, and is bound to be a source of friction as long as it is allowed to remain in being. Plainly the right course is to wind it up, and allow the miners at Point of Air to be bargained for by the North Wales Miners' Association, which is the regional unit of the Mineworkers' Federation.

* * *

Steps are at last being taken to make it easier for firms to employ part-time workers by not insisting on insurance contributions in such cases. The part-time worker who wants to be insured clearly ought to be allowed to be so; but there must be a fair number who do not want to be insured, and for whom contributions at the regular rates are a quite excessive deduction from the wages that can be earned by part-time employment. So far the concession has been applied only to unemployment insurance; but surely it ought to be extended to health and pensions insurance as well, in order to draw in the maximum number of persons who cannot work a full week, but can give part-time service. Many of these persons are not at all likely to go on working after the war, and have even less chance of ever drawing pensions than of ever being eligible for unemployment benefit. Health benefit they may, of course, draw; but most of them have probably doctors obtained in other ways. It is simple common sense not to burden them with what will be felt as simply a tax on their willingness to do their bit. The astonishing thing is that these concessions were not made long ago; but the plain truth is that hitherto the great majority of employers have flatly refused to take part-time labour seriously, and that only extreme shortage of workers is now inducing some of them to change their tune.

* * *

Revision of the Price Regulation Act, and of the Orders issued under it, is long overdue. The bodies which have been at work administering the Act have been confronted with one insoluble conundrum after another; and much stricter control of prices is becoming indispensable as consumers' supplies have to be much more drastically cut down. There is no doubt that all-round shortages of unrationed goods are going to become much greater in the near future. Stocks of more perishable goods have been heavily drawn upon. Especially among retailers there will be an increasing temptation to evade the price regulations as supplies are reduced; and accordingly more stringent measures will be needed. There will be no real cure, without a further drastic closing of retail shops. The unfortunate thing is that compensation applied now will be grossly unjust to the unfortunates who have been squeezed out already without it. But even that must not deter Mr. Dalton from doing his damnedest, both to make price regulations more effective and to prevent valuable man-power from being wasted in distributing goods that aren't there.

ADVERTISED GOODS.—The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.

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THE DELHI NEGOTIATIONS

THE only comment a responsible writer will wish to make on the end of the negotiations at Delhi is one that may help towards their resumption. No one can read what Dr. Azad and Pandit Nehru have since said without realising that they feel the tragedy of India's situation at least as painfully as we do ourselves. The Americans and the Chinese are no less deeply concerned. So great a proportion of mankind must get its way in the end. To concentrate criticism upon Congress would be both graceless and unjust. Behind last week's event lies our whole record of commission and omission in India from Clive's day to Mr. Churchill's. Too many of the commentators forget, moreover, that Congress differs from the other parties, which all registered their rejection of our offer, chiefly in this respect that at one moment it came very near to acceptance. The Moslem's League shrewdly kept silence for three weeks, but its rejection, when it came, was unqualified. Congress, at least has helped us by a frank disclosure of its reasons. There is still much that leaves us guessing and questioning, but we shall, none the less, attempt a reconstruction of the conditions under which these negotiations broke down.

It may be well to remind ourselves that Congress is much more than the group of leading intellectuals whose names we know—Dr. Azad, the Moslem thinker and theologian; Jawaharlal Nehru, Socialist, rationalist and student of history; Mr. Rajogopalachari, the conservative ex-Premier of Madras; Vallabhai Patel, the Gandhist and pacifist organiser. It is a mass party, which counts its members by millions, and has an organisation in thousands of villages. Its abler men have travelled and some of them know Russia and China as well as they know England. Their problem is to lead a half-educated mass, not all of it literate. What is it thinking? It has heard the long record of our defeats and misfortunes. It realises that round the shores of India our sea-power can no longer hold the enemy at bay; the great cities round the coast lie open to his bombers, and he may soon penetrate Bengal as he has penetrated Burma. It is obvious from Mr. Nehru's rebukes, remonstrances and appeals that a big part, perhaps the bigger part of this average mass opinion, is relatively indifferent. It does not like us. It blames us, comprehensively, for its own poverty. It resents our racial arrogance. The Japanese at least are fellow-Asiatics who also wear "the livery of the sun." It has heard a little of what we have to say about them and their Nazi allies: it shrugs its emaciated shoulders and dismisses all this as the white man's propaganda. A minority of Congress retains with Mr. Gandhi its objection on principle to armed resistance. Worse still, it is possible that in Bengal the influence of the most popular Hindu leader of this vast province, Subhas Bose, may suffice to win a welcome, as in Burma, for the invading "army of liberation."

What sort of resistance is possible? The regular army is not by modern standards well-armed, and is likely to find itself, as in Burma and Malaya, hopelessly inferior in the air. It was never organised for this emergency: all its guns were trained towards the North. The only hopeful tactics would be such as the Chinese adopted, but no one will argue that an army under foreign officers amid an indifferent population could adopt their methods with success. The thing could be done only if a national government trusted by the people could light in their hearts the flame of patriotic enthusiasm. The fittest of the younger men would form mobile guerilla corps: the most active of the peasants, with hand grenades, if there were no rifles, would form a Home Guard; some must prepare to "scorch the earth" and others to care for the destitute, while in such industrial centres as can be held in the interior, the work of armament goes on with American help. Two years have been wasted, and some time would elapse before any popular force could be ready. But as we think of such a plan in detail, the first difficulty is that the most spirited of the leading younger men, both in the Peasants' Leagues and among the intellectuals, are all of them radicals, "subversive elements" who have drifted for years in and out of prisons and concentration camps. But they alone have in such an emergency as this the manhood to lead in a guerilla struggle on Chinese lines. That raises two issues. Firstly on what conditions will they risk their all in the fight? Secondly, is official Britain prepared to trust them and arm them?

The reader may reply that Britain has made her offer—by implication "full" independence after the war. This was a good offer for the future, incomparably better than any before it and open to fair criticism only on one detail—the awkward case of the Princes. Unluckily it came too late to stir much gratitude. Our power to implement it may now be doubted. Across this "post-dated cheque" (to use Gandhi's phrase) history may after all write "No effects." Indians are not given to an excess of realism, but even they are bound to reflect that if we really mean after the war to make India in full legal form a Dominion with the right of secession, we should be ready to-day to entrust their leaders in effect with the practical powers of Dominion statesmen. The case for doing so is not merely that good faith demands it: the overwhelming, unanswerable case is that only when they see an Indian National Government exercising the reality of power in Delhi will the masses throw themselves into the struggle for their own freedom. But the change must be visible. An Indian Government under an Indian Premier there must be. Men will not lay down their lives at the bidding of an enlarged Council.

By general consent it is not practicable during the war to make constitutional changes in legal form. The device which commended itself to most of us was to transform the Viceroy's Executive Council into a *de facto* National Government. Unhappily that term was not used in the draft offer, and nothing so far-reaching was intended. Psychologically the associations of this Council are for Indians the worst possible. Its members were in the past a Committee of permanent Civil Servants, and the Indians who sat on it were commonly tame place-seekers, doomed to impotence. Leadership was the last thing it ever attempted: its members wrote minutes for the Viceroy's approval—or veto—and he in turn referred every new departure to the frigid criticism of the India Office. We gather from the published correspondence that in the earlier stages of the negotiations Sir Stafford met such objections with some success. In law the Viceroy would retain a nominal power of veto: in fact, he would soon interfere as little as the King does with a British Cabinet. He went on to suggest, if Dr. Azad's memory is accurate, that Indian affairs would be transferred from the detested India Office to the free atmosphere of the Dominions Office. In this way the Viceroy's Council would become *de facto*, or as Dr. Azad phrases it, "by convention," effectively a National Government. Simultaneously it was conceded that an Indian Defence Minister should be appointed, while General Wavell as War Minister would have the entire charge of strategy and operations. Over these Indians make no claim to control. What Congress had in mind was the formation of a coalition ministry. On this basis an agreement seemed in sight.

At what happened next we can only guess. Some suppose that Congress, aware of its own divisions, deliberately wrecked a hopeful agreement by taking an extreme attitude. Others ask whether Whitehall or Downing Street grew more rigid. All we have to guide us is Dr. Azad's final letter. When it saw the definition of the Defence Member's functions Congress thought them too limited. But it was over the status of the Indianised Viceroy's Council that the break occurred. The suggestion of a transfer to the Dominions Office faded out, and Dr. Azad felt himself once more in the icy grip of the India Office.

What was in his mind? Something, we should guess, like this: The Indian Defence Member, let us suppose, promptly drafts a scheme for the enlistment of a guerilla force or of a Home Guard. The millions are waiting some hopeful, some sceptical, some indifferent. His colleagues support him. General Wavell agrees. Then can he go to the microphone, as Mr. Eden did in our hour of peril, when he formed the Home Guard, and count on a mass response within half-an-hour? Not at all. Every detail must first be scrutinised by Whitehall. Weeks pass in ciphered discussion: the enthusiasm of the Indian masses evaporates, and in the end the scheme emerges in an emasculated form. Facing this prospect, Congress tabled its demand that the interim "National Government" (to give it that unauthorised name) should be a Cabinet with collective responsibility.

Then came the break, The arguments used look formidable on paper. To whom would this "Cabinet" be responsible—for the All-India Legislative Assembly would be a poor substitute for a Parliament? It would be irremovable, and subject to no popular control: in short, it would be a "dictatorship." Then came the painfully familiar argument for the retention of British control, in the interest of the minorities. There followed the equally familiar Indian answer which that claim always arouses. Rightly or wrongly Indians question whether this is Britain's motive. Is it, they ask, anxiety for the Moslem's or tenderness for the Princes or the Untouchables or just dislike for transferring power that moves the British Government?

Amid this unhappy dispute the realities may escape us. In this emergency, with the enemy at the gates, it is not possible to provide an ideal constitutional solution. The control of Lord Linlithgow and Mr. Amery may not seem to Indians a perfect substitute for an elected Parliament. What India needs, it seems to us, is not a Viceroy's Council, so elaborately checked and controlled that it can make no mistakes, but rather a strong, even a headstrong, Committee of Public Safety which knows how to lead, and even to drive. The danger of this stress on our duty to protect minorities is that it may lead Indians to wonder whether we ever mean to lay down our guardian's rights—and perquisites. The Moslem minority stands in need of no protection. It is strong in the army. It rules four provinces out of eleven. A Moslem theologian presides over Congress. To our thinking a coalition Ministry responsible to the chief Indian parties seems as near an approach to democracy as we need desire in wartime. If, unluckily, Mr. Jinnah should continue to stand aloof, there are responsible Moslem leaders, including in all probability the Premiers of Bengal, the Punjab and Sind, who would co-operate. But the label "National Government" should be boldly used and the India Office must be eliminated.

RIOM

THE Paris press has deplored the Riom case because the accused were not put against a wall and shot in 1940. One of them observed that this trial was the most important since the Convention of 1793 which condemned Louis XVI for treason against the nation. He was right. In 1793 the Monarchy was on trial; in 1942 the Republic. So Léon Blum has said both during the *instruction* and last month, in court. The Republic is on trial, and so far it has a good chance of winning, which is precisely why the case has now been indefinitely adjourned.

What has not been on trial is France's war guilt. The Vichy Government set up the Supreme Court of Justice at Riom in July, 1940, by Constitutional Act No. 5. Nobody doubted that Hitler was behind it. He has always been obsessed with the "war-guilt lie" of Versailles, and exacted this atonement. He wanted the rulers of France publicly branded as the authors of the war. Here, however, he reckoned without important elements in the situation. First, the Pétain Government was composed of soldiers or politicians deeply involved in the war's pre-history. They would not be anxious to condemn themselves. This time there were no Bourbons, Romanovs or even Hohenzollerns to act as scapegoats. Secondly, the French nation has a passion for justice and legality. The older men have not forgotten how the Dreyfus case rent the country, nor that the losers at the latter end were the Catholic and Army anti-Dreyfusards. So in spite of a speech by Pétain promising that the people would not be disappointed and that those guilty of causing the war would be judged, the indictments, when they were framed at last, contained no word of war guilt. They were concerned solely with defeat guilt. Léon Blum and Daladier as Prime Ministers since 1936, Pierre Cot and Guy la Chambre as Air Ministers, M. Jacomet, Daladier's controller-general, an official who acted, during the war, as something like a minister of supply, were accused of policy which weakened France by inadequate rearmament and misrepresentation of the true arms position. Léon Blum was also accused of social policy damaging to French security; Pierre Cot of disorganising the air ministry and supplying planes to Republican Spain; General Gamelin of incompetence in organising the High Command, the army, the manufacture of arms and the mobilisation of industry. Reynaud and Mandel, and two of Reynaud's secretaries, have not yet been tried. The accusation against them is of various acts, such as the export of French currency and agitation in Morocco—in short, of attempting to continue the war in the French Empire after the surrender.

There are three features of the trial unfamiliar to British law. One, indeed, is strange to France, too; all the accused, except Pierre Cot and Reynaud's secretaries, who are in America, are already imprisoned, having been condemned by a political court set up by Pétain in 1940. Daladier, Blum and Gamelin have been held this winter in the small icy fort of Portalet in the Pyrenees, in, one cannot but fancy, companionship as uncomfortable as their quarters. Pétain has stated that this circumstance is not to influence the Riom trial in any way; and the highly senior judges in charge of the case, under the presidency of M. Caous, counsellor at the Court of Cassation, show no sign of regarding their task as prejudiced by the previous political "sanctions."

Then there is the *instruction*, the preparation of the case. This was carried out by the judges themselves. The accused sent in memoranda: it was in this document that Blum insisted that the Republican régime was on trial. But 900 witnesses were examined in private, and 100,000 pages of dossier put under the noses of the unfortunate judges. Of this great cloud only some 215 are called to the public trial. (The advantage of the system of *instruction* is that irrelevant witnesses are disposed of, and the judges are fully conversant with the issues; they have been studying this case for over a year. The disadvantage is that the judges may begin the public hearing with their minds made up.) Perhaps it is a result of this preparation that the judges take so much more active a part in the proceedings than in England: the trial has often become a dialogue between M. Caous and Daladier. The accused themselves intervene freely to cross-examine and reply to witnesses. Whenever the case has dealt with political rather than legal issues—and that is most of the time—Daladier has fought it instead of his advocate, showing an extraordinary memory, and an obstinate, tireless ability disconcerting to hostile witnesses.

The bleak courtroom at Riom has been furbished up a little. They have hung some tapestries on the walls, and given the semi-circle of judges gilded armchairs *goût second Empire*. The five accused sit opposite them; Daladier, Blum, Gamelin, la Chambre, Jacomet; and behind them, enjoying the view of the backs of their heads, a strictly filtered press. Filtered; censored—only the Americans are able to give fairly accurate details—and in the case of the Vichy press, shepherded. Their instructions are to emphasise all weaknesses in war preparations, and to make the people realise that the former method of government was the cause of all their woes, and had to be changed; and to avoid any hint that the army, Pétain, or his policy are in question. What between heavy censorship and periods of *huis clos* or secret session, the reporting has been very defective.

The trial has had some high lights. Daladier's defence against the charge of inadequate preparation for war since 1936 was in part an account of rearmament, in part a devastating catalogue of Pétain's decisions as Minister of War and President of the War Council in 1934. The Marshal refused to prolong military service, reduced expenditure, opposed the fortification of the north-east on the ground that the Ardennes were "impenetrable." In 1934, Daladier said later, France had seven tanks and no anti-tank guns. A note from Pierre Cot reinforced this argument. As Minister for Air in 1937 he had proposed 100 per cent. increase of the air force. The Higher Military Commission, including Pétain, Darlan and Gamelin, refused it. He had begun parachutist training; it was suppressed by the Staff in 1939. On the question of nationalisation of the arms industry, Daladier said that ten factories were nationalised, 11,000 remained private. The nationalised works tripled their output. Schneider-Creuzot did not, because M. Schneider sabotaged, and a mixed system had to be devised. Léon Blum added a queer twist to this story. Schneider, he said, threatened to withhold arms he was making for the Soviet Union if his works did not remain private; so the Communists, very strong in the Creuzot works, supported him in opposing nationalisation! Daladier, backed by Guy la Chambre, accused Gamelin and the Army chiefs for not using the arms they had; at the débâcle millions of shells were in the factories; 2,500 aeroplanes unused; the tanks scattered all down the line instead of concentrated against the enemy attack; the best divisions, and far too many of them, in the Maginot and half-armed reserves used to hold the Meuse gap. Through all this Gamelin sat dumb. He stated at the outset that he could not speak without disloyalty to his subordinates, and would keep silence. The politicians did not spare him, saying repeatedly that the defeat was the soldiers' fault.

The numerous military witnesses also had to undergo Daladier's grilling. They gave their witness in manner varying with their views. They were in general agreement that the serving officers were excellent, the reserves not well enough trained. Generals Mittelhauser, Blanchard, Sciard and others declared that their men were equal to anything and fought with magnificent élan; but Mittelhauser said the 1939-40 winter of inaction was hard on morale. "Pour le caractère français la stagnation est insupportable." Veuillemin and Réquin, on the contrary, said that the youth of France had lost the spirit of total sacrifice and that the army had Communist cells. The more interesting debate turned on the use of weapons. Some generals said that the use of tanks as infantry support, the French method, was sound. France has its Blimps, too. Others said that the armoured division only dawned upon them after Norway. Mittelhauser said bitterly that Joffre was capable of learning from experience, Gamelin was not. Two or three generals spoke passionately of the need for armoured divisions, and said that the French tanks were equal to the German, if they had been properly used. All the soldiers lamented shortage of planes, and the lack of co-ordination between the army and air commands.

The general impression certainly was less that of want of preparation by the Front Populaire than of out-of-date military methods. Even Léon Blum, in his unrepentantly socialist defence, made this case. He inherited the fatal work of Cagoulards, as he pointed out; and when he took office a m. ·on men were on strike. He got them back to work without a civil war, by pledges of the 40-hour week and collective bargaining. But the 40-hour week never applied to arms factories, which, in fact, greatly increased output under nationalisation; except for the saboteurs France had been right to follow a policy of agreed disarmament, and the Socialists right, when that failed, to adhere to collective security. To accuse him of pacifism and of war-mongering at once was nonsense.

At mid-month came Hitler's furious outburst that the Riom trial was not touching the responsibility for the war. He was quite correct; and up to date it can hardly be more pleasing to Pétain, who emerges as the chief of the military directors responsible for France having either too few arms, or enough arms in the wrong places, or the wrong type of arms, when the crash came. The Republic had its defects, but it seems to have had less than the Conseil Superieur de la Guerre, of which Pétain and Darlan were leading members.

FREDA WHITE

AUX ARMES, CITOYENS?

A FEW weeks ago Mr. Lyttelton's name was in all the newspapers and the whole country was busily discussing the problem of war production. Since then, public attention has been diverted to other matters. The problem, however, remains and, to the best of our belief, is still quite unsolved. There is still, despite Mr. Lyttelton's appointment, none whose business it is to deal with the whole question of war output: much less is there any minister, or even any committee of ministers, which can, with expert guidance behind it, reach decisions on the vital question of man-power as a

whole. Conceivably, Mr. Lyttelton has gone into retreat for the purpose of propounding plans for coping with these vital issues; but, if so, it can be said confidently that he cannot himself deal with them under any authority with which he has been endowed, and that he will have either to ask for more authority or to propose some new plan for the co-ordination of "production" with other parts of the war effort.

One root problem that appears never to have been scientifically faced is that of the total distribution of man-power between alternative uses. It is altogether extraordinary that this should be still the case at the present stage of the war, long after the acute shortage of man-power, and of woman-power, for *all* purposes has become apparent. But few will be found to question the statement, made in the latest of the many reports of the Committee on National Expenditure, that this question has never been either clearly put or effectively answered. The fact is that, at any rate up to quite recently, and perhaps even now, the three Service Departments have been allowed to formulate their demands for man-power practically without check from other Departments. The three Supply Departments have then been allowed, in the second stage, to formulate their demands for labour for the munitions industries, and the remaining claimants on man-power, including the Board of Trade, the Mines Department, the Ministeries of Health and Agriculture, the local authorities, and a number of other bodies, have then been left to comply with the drafts on their own resources. Or they must object, in the hope of their protests somehow achieving modification of the original plans. Even when there have been attempts to relate the rate of call-up for the armed forces to the available supplies of weapons, the process has been for the Service Departments to stake out their claims independently and then accept some beating down, rather than for anyone to consider all the competing claims together, and endeavour to arrive at a rational apportionment of resources.

The result of this pull-devil, pull-baker procedure has been that the Army and the R.A.F. have been under a permanent temptation *not* to be economical in their use of men. For, the more men they could make some show of using, the more they have been likely to get; and current waste of men gives them resources on which they will be able to fall back later on for filling up the ranks. It is, of course, very difficult for the layman to judge the needs of such a body as the R.A.F.; but it is not easy not to be appalled by the number of men who appear to be needed to keep an aerodrome in service, even when it is not being used currently as an operational base. As for the Army, it is a fact beyond doubt that a widespread belief exists among soldiers that it is exceedingly wasteful of man-power.

Of course, the size of Army or Air Force that is justified depends on the use that is meant to be made of it as well as on the relative urgency of rival claims on the man-power which it uses up. Some apparent waste of men is a necessary incident of inactive waiting. But such inaction is quite different from waste resulting from defective organisation or overstaffing. The use made of skilled man-power in the armed forces was studied not so long ago by Sir William Beveridge, with pretty disquieting results: as far as we are aware, the even larger problem of the use of man-power that is not specially skilled has never been studied at all. Is there any evidence that the armed Forces, when they take on more women, reduce their men in proportion? Or that the number of men in the Forces bears a logical relation either to the actual supply of arms, or to the supply that can be reckoned on after sending all that can be spared and transported to aid the Russians? We very much doubt, and the Committee on National Expenditure appears to agree with us, whether either of the issues has ever been fully faced.

Yet these very issues must be faced. The drawing-in of additional labour from concentrated industries must continue; but it is bound to be an increasingly painful process. We agree again with the Committee on National Expenditure that, on the industrial front, the main reliance will have in future to be put on the better use of the existing labour force of the war industries, rather than on the finding of additional workers for them. This must be so, because of a sheer shortage of hands: nor must it be overlooked that there are branches of production which have been unduly starved of labour and may have to receive back some of the supply they have been painfully induced to disgorge. The cotton industry, as well as coal-mining, seems to be in this position. We are also compelled to inquire whether the armed Forces, even if they must keep a big reserve of trained men not actually fighting, cannot lend some of these men to help with urgent civilian tasks until they are needed for positive warfare.

Even the closest scrutiny will not reduce the number of men kept under arms. What it may do is to prevent the Government from acting too readily on the assumption that all gaps occurring in the armed Forces, from whatever cause, have to be promptly filled by the calling-up of an equivalent number of new recruits for training as soldiers or airmen. On this point there clearly ought to be some *expert* authority capable of offering the Cabinet impartial advice. There is a great deal to be said in favour of separating the National Service Department from the Ministry of Labour, of which it is now a part, and of putting it under a minister entitled to deal with the man-power question as a whole, including the demands of the armed Forces as well as of industry of all kinds.

It would then fall naturally to the Minister of Production to deal with the allocation among civilian occupations of the man-power assigned to industry. The Ministry of Labour, in this aspect of its work, should come under the authority of the Minister of Production. Mr. Bevin could then become Minister of National Service, leaving the rest of the Ministry of Labour to someone outside the War Cabinet; whereas, as matters now stand, there is not only a dangerous division of authority between Mr. Lyttelton and Mr. Bevin, but also, as the Select Committee on National Expenditure points out, a marked tendency for each of the supply departments to create its own Labour Department parallel, and overlapping, with the organisation of the Ministry of Labour. Moreover, the tendency towards clashes between these overlapping agencies is accentuated because the Labour Departments of the Ministry of Supply and Aircraft Production are, in general, highly centralised, whereas the Ministry of Labour is organised mainly on regional lines.

This centralisation is itself a considerable cause of waste of resources. It arises, especially in the case of the Ministry of Aircraft Production, largely out of a policy of dealing mainly through the big, nationally-organised firms as main contractors, and leaving these firms to make their own arrangements for sub-contracting. As long as this practice permits, the big national firms will always drive a horse and cart through any regional plan by going over the heads of the regional officials straight to the central heads of Supply or Aircraft Production or the Admiralty. Regional organisation is simply inconsistent with national methods which enable a few big firms to carve out their own principalities regardless of regional claims. And this wastes man-power, because it prevents many smaller firms from being used continuously

The man-power crisis is rapidly becoming so serious that these issues have to be raised afresh. It is no use to plead that the critics ought now to keep quiet and give Mr. Lyttelton a chance; for the powers given to him do not carry with them any authority to tackle the problems raised in this article. He can no doubt *ask* for this authority; but he does not possess it, nor can he get it without a new Cabinet decision. Plainly it is not a kind of authority that ought to be wielded by a Minister of *Production*. The key question is coming to be that of the right size for the armed Forces in relation to industry; and this is a question which involves many matters of high policy—what we are to send to the Russians, whether we are to arm the Indians with modern weapons, how much we are to try to get from the United States, and so on. These questions of man-power allocation are big enough to call for the service of a Minister co-equal with Mr. Lyttelton, and able to stand up to the Service Departments and the General Staff, as well as to the representatives of industry.

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to Duncan Easton.

Paste entries on postcard or slip of paper and give details of origin. Address to THIS ENGLAND, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Mrs. M. Steven suggests that the B.B.C. mark items polluted by swearing, in the published programmes, by an asterisk, "or, better still, a swastika," and so save people switching their sets off and on.—*Edinburgh Evening News.*

Book May 6th in your diary. The speaker on this occasion will be Mr. S. W. Alexander, City Editor of the *Evening Standard*. Subject: "Back to God and Sound Money."—Announcement by Incorporated Sales Managers' Assoc.

After two months' effort the Maidstone Borough Council, with the help of the Kent County Council, the Ministry of Works and Building, and the regional authority, has carried half-way to completion the process of buying a mattress.—From report in the *Times*.

Spirituous Lady would like to meet others; Port Isaac-Polzeath-Rock district.—Personal column in *Lostwithiel & Fowey Guardian*.

Papers relating to the plans for the defence of Britain in the event of an invasion were left behind by a high-ranking officer in the bedroom of a northern hotel. The manager sent them by registered post to a military establishment nearby with a request that the parcel should be forwarded to the officer. He was thanked for preventing the papers from getting into the wrong hands, but reproved for entrusting them to the post.—*Daily Telegraph*.

I believe Sir Stafford Cripps may become Britain's Reconstruction Prime Minister, though some pooh-pooh the possibility of a vegetarian attaining this exalted position.—From article on Sir Stafford Cripps in the *Strand Magazine*.

After Dunkirk, did you feel quite happy about the war?—From quiz, "Are You a Worrier?" in *Daily Mirror*.

A LONDON DIARY

UNLESS Sir Warren Fisher is prepared to deny Mr. Morrison's statements about Col. Blatherwick, it would seem to follow that the Home Secretary was right in deciding to get rid of a Deputy Regional Commissioner who does not appear to have taken his job sufficiently seriously. If Sir Warren Fisher himself wanted to plead for Col. Blatherwick, I should have expected him to send a private letter to Morrison before making a violent public assault on the Minister. Having written this very offensive letter, Sir Warren Fisher cannot surely have expected to remain in a position which in any case involved his collaboration with the Home Secretary, even if there is dispute about their precise relationship. I have always heard the best possible things of Sir Warren, and his departure is a real loss to the public service. On this occasion he appears to have lost his temper in public, and he was unfortunate enough to choose a fiery-tempered Minister with whom to be cross.

* * *

No Home Secretary is ever likely to be popular in time of war, and I do not myself attribute to Herbert Morrison all the sinister intentions suspected by the eminent speakers who championed the Freedom of the Press at last Saturday's meeting. But the three thousand people who came to listen to Joad, Bevan, Foot, Horabin and others were excited by a real, not a bogus, issue. The force of the meeting lay in its very lively realisation that rulers who have made a ghastly hash of things are increasingly angry with those who reveal their shortcomings. There is danger, no doubt, in irresponsible criticism: it is nothing to the danger of allowing the incompetent to rule and lead. I was sorry to see the new Minister of War indulging in the anti-press talk current among Ministers; surely Sir James knows that if it had not been for criticism, a far less lively brain would still be at the head of the War Office, if indeed the war was not already lost.

* * *

The issue went beyond the question of the *Worker*, or even of the *Daily Mirror*, which, by the way, seems meekly to have emasculated itself in deference to Morrison's warning. There was a greater issue beneath the surface. Aneurin Bevan and Michael Foot were both immensely eloquent. Foot referred to the fact that Frank Owen, Editor of the *Evening Standard*, had been taken off into the Army; it was no coincidence, he thought, that one of the Government's leading critics should disappear in this way just when the *Daily Mirror* was warned. (Frank Owen, in fact, was automatically called up when he failed to send in his application for deferment, but this technical error would have been quickly passed over if Ministers whom he has criticised had wanted to maintain the full vigour of the *Evening Standard*.) The audience at the Central Hall wanted Frank Owen on the platform. Frank, being a soldier, could not make a speech and was only brought out on to the platform in the end when the collection was increased by a cheque for £50 on condition that the donor should shake hands with Frank Owen. When this generous individual arrived he turned out to everyone's astonishment to be a merchant seaman, who had been given £50 as danger money and gave it away as a protest because Chinese sailors suffering the same dangers are not given equal treatment. He spoke haltingly into the microphone. He said in a few words about all that there is ultimately to be said. We all want to be brothers, he said, and yet we are killing each other; we all want to enjoy the fruits of the earth, and yet we are keeping them from each other. But because we all want the right as free men to think and speak and live our own way, there is no escape from the necessity of winning this bloody war.

* * *

Rumour says that Mr. Churchill's personal insistence was responsible for the promise now made by the Ministry of Food to introduce drastic curtailment of "luxury feeding" in wartime. Several weeks ago I pointed out that for the Ministry to treat this question as though it were solely a matter of calculating the tiny percentage of total food supplies concerned in the so-called "luxury" restaurants, was evidence of a serious and annoying failure to estimate the more "imponderable" effects of this business upon the public morale. The new policy of restriction is admittedly a recognition of the fact that conspicuously lavish feeding possibilities offered to the rich are an irritant whose effects are quite out of proportion to any material damage thereby done to the national larder. In other words, "luxury restaurants" had begun to be a symbol of an "inequality of sacrifice" which is so real and glaring that we really cannot afford to underline it unnecessarily. It is good that the Ministry should have at length taken account of this fact and acted upon it. It it be true that Mr. Churchill was the first to grasp the point and call for action, it may even be a small indication that at last someone or other is succeeding in telling him useful truths about what the public is really thinking. I can think of few things more encouraging than that.

* * *

In the last war nothing did more to discredit the press and to breed general cynicism than the discovery that many atrocities were invented and many photographs faked. I recall, for instance, the origin of the corpse factory story, which grew from the bright idea of an official propagandist. He transposed two captions so that human corpses and not animal carcasses were taken to be melted down for glycerine. For these reasons, in a war in which atrocities do in fact occur everywhere, newspapers should be particularly careful not to lay themselves open to the suspicion of faking. I have in front of me copies of the same picture published in two Sunday papers. The picture shows corpses lying on the ground in the snow and a man in a Russian cap supporting in his arms a woman with her arms outstretched. According to one paper this is a picture of a Russian father raising the murdered body of his daughter in Kerch. According to the other this is the picture of a mother who "has searched among the bodies of the slain, dreading to see a well-loved face upturned in death. Her worst fears are realised. She finds her son slain, and in an abandonment of grief flings wide her arms and cries her anguish aloud." Somebody ought to have made up his mind whether this woman with her arms outstretched was a corpse or not.

* * *

Illustrating the difficulty of an understanding with India, a Hindu friend of mine tells me that he fell into conversation recently with an Indian sailor. He told him that the situation had changed since he was last ashore. Japan was bombing India . . . The sailor replied: "There are two dogs; the white dog and the black dog. The first dog barks and bites and calls you black. The second dog barks and bites and can't call you black because he is not white himself." My friend tried to explain that the Japanese were incomparably more dangerous to India. He made no impression. "They've called me a black man for thirty years," he said. The bitterness bred by Anglo-Indian disdain is Japan's strongest weapon.

* * *

A very odd scene in Haymarket. At a high window a fire: a young man throwing sand on to the burning frame of the window and finally apparently extinguishing the flame with cups of water. No stirrup pump in evidence. Then, just as the crowd below was turning away, sure that the show was over, the furious ringing of fire-engine bells and a procession of engines began to arrive in great style. Eager young firemen, starved of work for a year, leapt to the ground. A ladder shot up to the window and firemen raced up it. It was too funny. Everyone laughed. How many more engines arrived I don't know. Six had turned up by the time I left.

CRITIC

TWO POEMS

THE MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN TO THE PRIGGISH YOUNG MAN

Your reason stands
Articulate, well-bred,
Without a flaw;
But even gods self-satisfied are dead,
Although Olympian-born;
And I am sad for you.

But if I saw
Your breast by catastrophic sobbing torn,
And black bowed head,
And saw your hands
Beat a forbidden door until they bled,
I should be glad for you.

BY THE RIVER

Look where, with rounded hip and loosened arm,
Hair seaweed-heavy, and closed eyelids calm,
On willowed banks that keep the sun away
Corinna sleeps in the green month of May.

FRANCES CORNFORD

PLANNING FOR THE WALKER

LORD JUSTICE SCOTT'S Committee on *Land Utilisation in Rural Areas* has been in more or less continuous session for the last six months. During that time it has received over a hundred bundles of written evidence and seen sixty-five sets of witnesses from a large number of Youth, rambling, camping, cycling, travel, hostel Associations. It is now gestating its report. The report of the Ramblers' Association, for instance, is a comprehensive document covering the whole field of the post-war countryside—its planning and its preservation, facilities for access to its wild places and its coast, its protection against burial under the debris of bursting towns and being gobbled up by sprawling suburbs—from the angle of the townsman who uses the country for the exercise of his limbs, the resting of his soul, the refreshing of his spirit and the cultivation of his friendships.

The townsman's is in the main a new interest arising from the revolution in cheap transport. This has enabled thousands of young people, singly, in couples, in groups or organised in clubs—in the sixteen federations comprising the Ramblers' Association there were organised in peace-time over six hundred clubs—to go on Saturdays or Sundays and, increasingly, for the whole week-end into the country. You could see the living witnesses of this revolution at the Central Station at Manchester on a Sunday morning, complete

with rucksacks, shorts and hob-nailed boots, waiting for the early trains to Edale, Hope and the Derbyshire Moors. Looking at them, one might be tempted to think that the whole of Manchester was in exodus; justifiably, since these northern cities are by any reckoning the ugliest conglomerations of bricks and mortar with which mankind has ever defaced the unprotesting surface of the earth. For nearly a hundred years men and women stayed in these places because they must, worked in them, played in them, and on Sundays, when piety forbade games, lounged in their streets and waited for the pubs to open. In our day, hiking has replaced beer as the short cut out of Manchester, and, turning their backs upon the cities which their fathers made, droves of young people make sorties at any and every opportunity into the countryside. You could see the same sight at Waterloo or Victoria on a fine Sunday morning.

Before the war the Youth Hostels' Association was covering England with a chain of hostels, at which the walker, the rambler or the cyclist could put up cheaply for the night, cook his own meal if he wanted to, or, at most hostels, get a decent meal provided by the establishment at a reasonable charge. The need for country sights and sounds, the desire for occasional solitude, are, as we are coming increasingly to realise, instinctive, albeit unacknowledged, needs of our beings, and intermittent intercourse with nature a condition of full and balanced living.

Of course this movement has the disabilities as well as the virtues of things that are young and vigorous and crude and new. The open gates, the broken glass, the plants torn up by their roots, the litter, the girls in shorts, the hikers singing horribly in village streets—these things I know as well as another, and I know, too, how horrible they are. But what do you expect? You cannot bring up people in towns and expect them to come easily to terms with nature. You cannot deprive them for generations of their natural heritage of beauty and expect them to know how to treat it. In the summer before the war, walking along the Sussex Downs, I saw an Austin Seven perched on the very top of Amberley Mount, devastating the largest possible area of country, an offence to the eye, a blot upon the Down. I approached intending to remonstrate with the owner and to call his attention to the rarely observed law forbidding cars to park more than fifteen yards from the roadside. It was a hot day and both the windows of the car were up. Inside this enclosed metal box there sat a young man and his girl. The girl was reading the *Illustrated Weekly* and the young man was listening to the Fat Stock prices over the wireless . . .

But what, I repeat, do you expect? What even do you expect in the matter of litter? It was in the nature of the case, was it not, that Democracy, when it went to call on the country, should leave behind its visiting card, for whoever troubled to teach it that one does not leave visiting cards on the country?

As the report of the Ramblers' Association the Scott Committee puts it:—

> Nothing can now arrest the influx of townsmen into the country. It is accordingly suggested that special consideration should be given to the question of their needs in your deliberations, since if the influences which have been at work during the last fifty years continue unchecked, the would-be walker, having struggled at last through the lengthening suburbs to the country, will find that what he seeks still escapes him. It would be an ironical commentary upon our times if the first generation of the disinherited which had learnt the love and the use of the countryside were to find that no countryside was left for it to love!

Cheap transport makes the country more accessible; in so doing it often destroys it as country. It is no longer the countryside that lies at the doorway of the towns, but a No Man's Land, where the towns have scattered their debris in the shape of roads, garages, petrol pumps, villas, notice-boards, advertisement-hoardings, dumps, telegraph poles, pylons, gas works, water works, mental homes, cinema halls, poor-law institutions, prisons, and all the rest of the scurf which the centres of our civilisation secrete on their outskirts. Here, say, is a village, some twelve miles out of London; it is the sort of place that the townsman in search of rest and recreation would be inclined to visit on his week-end walks. Once he would have taken a bus four or five miles out of London and walked the remaining seven or eight, over fields, along footpaths, down lanes. Now his way lies along a main road, lined with houses, whose centre is a maelstrom of hurtling cars. If he tries to leave it, he finds himself entangled in a maze of private houses and their gardens, pimples in the red rash with which the green face of England has in the neighbourhood of our towns been everywhere infected. When, at last, he reaches his village, he finds not a self-contained unit with a life different from the life of the town that he knows, but an extension of his own suburb. Southern England, which was once a countryside studded with towns, is to-day becoming neither town nor country, but a single suburb, sprawling amorphously from London to the coast. Thus, the second result of the development of cheap transport tends to nullify the advantages accruing from the first. While the first result was to give access to the country, the second is to destroy the country which is made accessible.

This, in brief, is the situation with which the Open Air Organisations were concerned. Among tho proposals submitted by the Ramblers' Association the following are the most important.

England must be planned as a whole. We can no longer permit its fate to be settled by a local authority on which only its inhabitants are represented. The Lake District, for example, the most obvious area for a National Park, should no longer be the sport of three County Councils following different policies, but should be nationally administered as a National Park. Town and country planning are, therefore, national interests and not merely local. From this it follows that they must become the concern of a national body, a Ministry of Amenities, with power to insist that beauty counts as well as profit, and that what is a national asset to delight the hearts of us all should not always be exploited to fill the pockets of a few. It follows, too, that legislation in this sphere should not always be permissive, but should sometimes be compulsory. The enabling laws are often admirable, but nobody takes advantage of them because nobody has to.

Given the requisite machinery, its tasks are as obvious as familiar. For example, there must be National Parks. The right policy here is, as the Ramblers point out, a simple one; it is simply to "let alone." "Let alone" means no villas, no wide concrete roads, no pylons, no sprucing up, no iron railings, no privet bushes. The report goes on:

> It should be a charge upon the authority administering national parks to ensure that sleeping accommodation and food are available. Existing organisations of a non-commercial nature, such as the Y.H.A., H.F., C.H.A., W.T.A., etc., should be given every encouragement to establish hostels in national park areas, but any accommodation provided should conform in structure and use with the general character of the area.

In addition there should be access to uncultivated hills and moorland, unhampered by the right of "sportsmen" to insert pieces of metal from a distance into the bodies of defenceless birds; there should be access to all parts of the sea coast that are not already in private hands, and to some that are. A Footpaths Commission is advocated to map and determine those paths which are public rights of way, thus superseding the present unworkable procedure which requires proof, usually impossible to obtain, of dedication and or public use for twenty years. Footpaths which have been allowed to fall into neglect and ploughed up during the war should be restored and new ones laid down. Above all, the areas in which building is permitted must be restricted in accordance with a definite plan. It is with the country that the walker is primarily concerned, and with the planning of towns only in so far as this has repercussions upon the country.

C. E. M. JOAD

DELIGHTFUL

FOR once I disagree with Mr. Desmond MacCarthy. Writing in the *Sunday Times* of the modern Trollope revival, he refers to Leslie Stephen's prophecy that Trollope's novels would give pleasure to later generations and holds that Stephen was right in his guess why this would be so. The middle of the nineteenth century, he points out, was a time of vast changes (intellectual, social and political), but, according to Stephen, Trollope—at least in speaking through his characters—was unaware of this. Stephen's comment on the Trollopian rose-coloured view of life was:

> And yet in this ancient novelist we see the society of the time, the squires and parsons and officials, and the women whom they courted entirely unconscious of any approaching convulsions; imagining that their little social arrangements were to endure for ever; that their social conventions were the only ones conceivable; and, on the whole, mainly occupied in carrying on business in a humdrum way and sweetening life by flirtation with healthy and pretty young women without two ideas in their heads.

And on this Mr. MacCarthy comments: "The effect of this inaccurate picture on us would be to make us look back on that time as a delightful one, 'when it was possible to take things quietly, and a good, sound, sensible optimism was the prevalent state of mind."

To me it seems that the Trollope world was not a delightful world at all, if by a delightful world one means a world in which one would rather be living than in the world to-day. I doubt whether one of Trollope's readers in a hundred regards Barsetshire as a fairyland or feels that he has missed one of the best things in life through never having been invited to tea by Mrs. Proudie. I enjoy reading Trollope, but I have never wished even to have been a Trollope Bishop. I was reading *Phineas Finn* the other day, but not for a moment did I long to have been an impecunious Irish M.P. of the Victorian age who, even when falling in love, had to think of the effect of marriage on his career, and who was pursued into the House of Commons by a money-lender with whom he had backed a bill for a negligent friend. The world in which Phineas Finn lived may have been static from some points of view, but, from another point of view, it was a dangerous world—a world in which one could still be challenged to a duel for proposing to propose to a girl loved by another; and a world in which most of us would have felt desperately dull.

I doubt, however, whether I have ever read a good novel or play or epic that made me wish to have lived in the world portrayed in it. I envy Mr. Pickwick his private means, his benevolence,

his coaching tours, and his acquaintance with Sam Weller; but I would not willingly share his experiences in the Breach of Promise case or in the Fleet. I enjoy Scott all the more because Rob Roy and Meg Merrilees and Jeanie Deans belong to a world into which it is for ever impossible for me to enter. Thackeray's world in *Vanity Fair* seems to me equally enjoyable to read about and equally undesirable to live in. And who would care to be born into the environment of Madame Bovary or into the nineteenth-century atmosphere of *Père Goriot!* The nineteenth century in fiction may appear static, in the sense that the characters were unaware of all the convulsions, social, political, and religious, with which they were threatened. But the individual life was always beset by uncertainty. Even when they wore top hats, men walked on thin ice as their descendants do. In love and in ambition they were as subject to apprehension and despair as though they had known that revolution was coming with the sunrise. If men and women in the old days had felt that their personal world was static and would go on for ever, tragic drama would never have been born. I doubt, however, whether there was ever a generation in which the sense of insecurity was not widespread at the crisis of life. The Victorian English undoubtedly felt fairly secure against foreign invasion and vast social topsyturvies; but there were plenty of fears to disturb their equanimity and the delightfulness of their paradise. They trod on the crust of a volcano not only in their personal lives, but in their politics. To many a Victorian, Gladstone was as ominous a portent as Lenin became to a later generation. A miniature Home Rule Bill excited men in top hats in 1886 to greater hostility than the prospect of Communism would excite most people to-day.

I myself grew up in a world that seemed peculiarly unsafe. It was, for the moment, static; but what if the Catholics got on top of us and confiscated our farms, cut our throats, and generally weltered in our gore? Every generation has some bogy to be afraid of, if it is only a just Chancellor of the Exchequer. When I was a Victorian child I used to hear business men saying that high wages were ruining industry and that high taxation was driving capital out of the country. Yet in those days there were no high wages and there was no high taxation. I doubt whether the moneyed classes were more satisfied with their vision of the future then than the moneyed class are with theirs to-day. For the future has always been uncertain and threatening since the Golden Age. Trollope undoubtedly conveys this sense of uncertainty in *Phineas Finn*.

And it seems to me that, in novels, plays and films, this state of uncertainty on the part of the characters is one of the ingredients of our pleasure. Even people who prefer a happy ending like to be kept on tenterhooks about the fate of the hero or heroine until almost the last chapter. If Ulysses had had a smooth voyage home across interminably sunny seas, his story would not have been worth more than a hundred lines. In spy stories, in which the spy is working on one's own side, the hero must run within a nail's breadth of death on page after page in order to keep up our interest. People who lead a delightful existence, free from peril and free from panic, may be enviable in ordinary life, but they are not the people we most like to read about. To absorb the imagination, human beings must walk on a tightrope, if it is only on the way to a deanery or an under-secretaryship. The world of Jane Austen is a world of uncertain heartbeats as is the world of Edgar Wallace. Remote from wars, it has its own troubles, and without those troubles our delight in it would wane.

Probably, however, most of us know at least one novel in which life seems so wonderful that in youth we dreamed of it as the perfect life, and, if we had been given our choice, would gladly have been reborn into it as the principal character. Such a novel—for me, at least—was Ouida's *Under Two Flags*. I have not read it for between forty and fifty years, but I still have a weakness for that beautiful, clean-limbed young Englishman who could sit up all night smoking and gambling on the eve of a great steeplechase, rise in the morning and seize by the scruff of the neck a man who had insulted a woman and throw him over the railings of the racecourse pavilion, and in the afternoon mount his horse, ride him with nerves of steel, and return from winning the steeplechase as cool as if he had only taken a walk along the Brighton front. Much did I envy him, too, because, in order to shield a woman's name—rather unnecessarily—he endured permanent disgrace, and, giving up all the glories of life, disappeared into the French Foreign Legion, where the girl called Cigarette loved him and gave her life for him. My memory of the plot may be inaccurate, but I think I envied Ouida's hero beyond any other hero in Victorian fiction. Next most enviable seemed the young men who got their ribs broken stopping runaway horses with beautiful girls riding them. Beautiful and rich. I always longed to stop a runaway horse with a beautiful girl riding it till I saw a Presbyterian elder one Sunday trying to stop a runaway horse by waving an open umbrella at it. He retreated as the horse drew nearer, and, as it tore past, I realised that he was right, and that stopping runaway horses was a much more difficult—and dangerous—job than I had imagined it. The world of runaway horses never seemed such a delightful world again.

Nowadays I am envious of nobody and no age in fiction. I had rather live among the people I know than among people I read about. I have no longing for the good old days as portrayed by Anthony Trollope or any other novelist. I should feel in exile among them, however deceptively secure their foundations—as far from home almost as I should feel in the Garden of Eden.

Y. Y.

THE MOVIES

"The Foreman Went to France," at London Pavilion
"Listen to Britain," Generally Shown

How to make a propaganda film that shall draw audiences and instil a lesson without pointing the cold finger of instruction becomes a major problem in wartime. Documentary or feature, which is it to be? The drawback—from the point of view of popular appeal—of the first is that queues after waiting in the draught want to be pampered by easy laughs and cosy dreams, and ten minutes' realism with a message provides as a rule neither. True, from time to time, a story torn out of the news and brought to life—*Men of the Lightship*, for example—*can* hit audiences, and hit them hard. People who had trickled aimlessly to their seats gasped when the Nazi plane swooped down and machine-gun bullets tattooed the deck; but (here was conventionality asserting itself) the biggest gasp went up over a muttered oath from one of the gunned men.

Then, should that conventionality of audiences be met halfway? Should the expected laughs and sighs be thrown in, when there is an important message to be conveyed? My own feeling is for austerity, for yielding nothing and relying on the difference between the day-dream film and the fact film to make the latter more effective. It can be done, but only perhaps now and then, with material and a war situation that provide drama. The easier way, certainly, is to fall back on the feature, competing in an entertainments column with other features and getting away with it. Here the danger is that the better the film, the less efficient the propaganda; *Forty-Ninth Parallel* was a big hit that gave only a bleat for democracy. *The Foreman Goes to France* makes a much better job of its double function. It more than holds its own in a week containing week-ends in Havana and nights in New Orleans. It tells a true story of a foreman who salvaged important plant from France at the time of the collapse; it makes the story convincing as well as dramatic. The English foreman slips through some thrilling adventures before reclaiming his machines, and in the meantime, without any sense of being lectured, we have been impressed by a number of things. One is the individual dash of the Englishman at his job; another is the plight, foreshadowing defeat, of an uninstructed people trailing out helplessly across the countryside; a third is the fortitude of the French people on which we can still rely; a fourth is Fifth Column activity—a mayor and a station-master are among the enemy's disguised agents. *The Foreman Went to France*, in fact, is very good propaganda against panic during invasion, all the better because audiences are left to make inescapable deductions for themselves. As a film with a purpose it is a striking success, and I must admit that the parts I liked least—Tommy Trinder's unrelenting patter as a joker in khaki—went down best with the house. Clifford Evans gives his usual display of lean eagerness, the more appropriate here for being under fire. Constance Cummings—we can't do without a "little sex in it," as Preston Sturges said—looks nice in an American way that will capture transatlantic audiences too. The French characters (what a relief!) are played by Frenchmen, and the details of French landscape, railway station, advertisements have been caught exactly. Perhaps the most encouraging thing about this effective and unpretentious film is that it points the way to even better achievements in the same field. An audience that has digested *The Foreman Went to France* will be readier to accept other films with that "little bit more" which makes for memorability as well as easy success. Cavalcanti, Priestley and William Walton have contributed to this film; such a combination of talents, stretched to the full, could produce a screen masterpiece. *The Foreman Went to France* isn't that. But it is a good job. The director—a name new to me—is Charles Frend.

Listen to Britain, now released, was the most striking of the batch of half a dozen new M.O.I. films reviewed in this column some weeks ago. This Crown Unit film, directed by Humphrey Jennings, with publicity rather than propaganda as its aim, is a fantasia on sounds in wartime. It moves delightfully and subtly from the factory machines and sirens to a concert at the National Gallery. It helps to weld closer in a general way many auditory sensations of a people at war, and has (like all good films) a delight and continuity of its own.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

PLAYS AND PICTURES

British and French Pictures at the Lefevre Galleries

The picture-dealers who remained open through London's grimmest months placed artists and connoisseurs under an obligation that they will not forget. And it is a pleasure to find that the Lefevre Galleries have now resumed their place among the pleasure resorts of London. The mixed show now on view includes no surprises but a number of enjoyable works. The Vuillard is most fetching, the little pale Renoir seascape, the fine Utrillo are other stars of the collection. The *fauve* Derain, though not to everyone's taste, strikes us as one of his best works—most preferable to anything he has painted for many years. Frances Hodgkins, Ethel Walker, Vanessa Bell, Leslie Hunter, Duncan Grant, Matthew Smith and John Piper are among the British exhibitors. William Johnstone, whose work is new to us, shows a sensitive and imaginative landscape as well as a much less convincing figure-piece.

GIVE IT UP
if it's waste paper!

Correspondence

THE FUTURE OF THE EMPIRE

SIR,—It was with considerable interest that I read this article indicating problems of colonial administration which will have to be solved after the war, but I was interested to notice that no reference was made to the contribution which anthropological and sociological knowledge may be expected to make to such a solution.

The fundamental difficulty, not purely economic or political, or even a mixture of these two alone, is inherent in colonial administration of the modern era, where a technically superior culture dominates a technically inferior one, and only by a further intensive programme of anthropological research upon the problem of culture contact, such as that programme recently sponsored by the International Institute of African Languages and Cultures, can show the way towards a lessening of its evils. The functional inter-relationship of culture items in a given Society is only too often forgotten, even by the administrator on the spot, so that we have the ludicrous situation in which measures taken to discourage the "immoral" custom of polygamy have resulted in a breakdown in tribal standards of sexual morality (formerly strict enough) and a worsening of the position of women. In the same way, the measures of industrial, agricultural and political change which your contributor mentions cannot be carried out without constant reference to the culture of the native people in question.

It is, moreover, unfortunate that the realisation of the need for "an economy controlled and planned in the interests of the community" should have come so late, in view of the widespread change which has come about in the social organisation of native communities, particularly in Africa. Originally, these communities were based upon reciprocal obligation and a strong sense of social unity, but with the coming of Western civilisation the tendency has been towards individualism. Each item of Western culture introduced was another blow to group consciousness and group control, until to-day we have such spectacles as the slum yards of Johannesburg, where common standards of conduct are almost completely absent, and the conditions of life a disgrace to the administration whose responsibility it is.

Thus, we have a period of social preparation in progress similar to that which, in Europe, preceded nineteenth-century *laisser-faire* industry, while parallel to it in the centres of Western civilisation we have a movement towards Socialism. If Socialism is to be successfully established in the colonies it must be based upon powerful community spirit, which the present unplanned introduction of new techniques and values makes impossible of achievement. If and when the period of replanning colonial policy arrives, only the anthropologist and the sociologist can provide the information upon which a stable social organisation can be built for the colonial peoples—which presupposes the checking of the modern tendency to social atomisation and the encouragement of group organisation.

B. A. HUTCHINSON

NON-VIOLENCE

SIR,—In the interesting article dealing with India and the non-violent creed, Mr. Kingsley Martin gives what he considers are the two factors accounting for the defection from non-violence in that country.

The first factor is "the realisation by the leaders of Indian opinion . . . that with modern weapons and modern methods of propaganda the conquering invader may fasten his talons far more deeply in the country than ever in the past. He (the conquering invader) will begin by finding in that country those who will rule it for him. He will not need to kill all those he conquers; he will need simply to occupy their territory and so to educate their children that they are no longer dangerous to the occupying Power. He may make revolt impossible. He will destroy the very possibility of discussion. He will prevent dangerous thoughts by destroying literature and breaking up associations out of which freedom has a chance to arise."

Does not Mr. Martin's figure of speech "the conquering invader, *he*" show the weakness of the reasoning which, he states, has convinced the Indian leaders and "many British pacifists"? The conquering invader is never a "he"; that is, an army or nation so disciplined, so welded into a unity that it acts with one mind and pursues one unalterable policy; composed not of men, but robots which, by some miraculous means (propaganda?), have only corporate thoughts, feelings, reactions. No. Not Italy, certainly; not Germany (or is Vansittart right?); not even Japan—to take modern examples. Surely it is the realisation that the invading conqueror is composed of individuals who, however much their individualities are lost while conquering, are capable of human feelings to some degree that gives the believer in non-violence the basis of his hope.

The protagonist of non-violence expects to achieve results by affecting individuals in the first place; the British Tommy and the members of the British public, as Mr. Martin says, were the factors which would have brought success to an Indian policy of non-violence in the past. He knows, too, that time, a long time, is needed. When he thinks of ultimate victory it is not this year or next year he has in mind—it is the long-view philosophy behind non-violence that explains its more ready acceptance by the Eastern races.

Doubtless the rulers of an aggressor nation, if they could bring their men to do the act and do it quickly, could overcome effectively a comparatively small body of non-violent opponents by completely annihilating it. But with nations of many millions this course is quite unpractical, and Mr. Gandhi is, I believe, perfectly correct when he says that China and India could by adopting non-violent resistance absorb the Japanese—modern weapons, propaganda and all.

R. FRASER REEKIE

BITTER ENDERS

SIR,—If you agree that Germany must be disarmed and kept disarmed, how do you intend to keep an industry, which Fritz Thyssen himself declared to be over-industrialised in 1918, "constantly employed in supplying the world's civilian needs"? What you and all those who want a Western European concentration of industry under international control are really proposing has been the dream of Germany's heavy industrialists since 1887. They have never ceased their machinations to secure it, and they know better than any well-meaning wishful thinkers that possession on the spot is worth more than any title on paper.

I respectfully suggest that you face the issue squarely rather than employ your eloquence in avoiding it. Let us have a plain statement of how you propose that Germany's industrial potential should be employed—something which even Hitler never succeeded in achieving fully, although during the years 1933 to 1939 the German war machine was running at high speed. Not forgetting that since 1918 Germany's potential production of iron and steel has doubled.

WALTER LOEB

[If, as we suppose, Mr. Loeb is writing in defence of Lord Vansittart's ideas, we would point out to him that he has ignored the main issue on which we were commenting—the demand that German heavy industry shall be "destroyed." That, as we urged, would be to impoverish not only Germany but the civilised world as a whole. To adopt such a war aim would be to warn German workers that they must fight to the bitter end. In economic terms, to say that Germany was "over-industrialised" is meaningless, until the market is specified which she served, might have served, or will serve. Our own island was much more obviously over-industrialised unless it had had the world-market at its disposal: in fact, it relied largely on a preferential imperial market. The problem Mr. Loeb is

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raising is really, What is to be the economic organisation of the world after the war? The future is quite obscure; but our aim should surely be the full employment of the heavy industries of all the advanced peoples, including the Germans, in order to furnish machine tools of all kinds to equip the backward peoples, alike in Eastern Europe, China, India and Africa. The programme should aim at the development not merely of their agricultural resources, but also of their light and processing industries. It might, in the early stages at least, be organised on Lend-Lease terms. The short-range aim should be to avoid an otherwise inevitable crisis of unemployment. The long-range aim should be to raise the level of life of the primary producers up to that of the industrial populations. If German industry is fully employed in the satisfaction of civilian demand, then we should have got rid of the capitalist drive towards military expansion and great armaments.

We know nothing of the conditions of future settlement. If, in order to answer Mr. Loeb, we make the large assumptions of a victory by Britain, the U.S.S.R. and U.S.A. and a peace made by these Powers in unison, then we suggest that any intelligent economic plan may well have to take account of the unbalanced over-development in Britain, in the U.S.A., or in Germany, of some branch or branches of industry: the aim would then be not to "destroy," but to adapt. The guarantees other than full employment and disarmament on which we should rely would be (1) a German social revolution; (2) some quasi-federal organisation of Europe; (3) an international force; (4) an international control of strategic raw materials. To go into detail now would be to indulge in pipe-dreams in the dark. We are content to lay down a general principle—that after the colossal destruction of this war, the central aim of civilised men should be to conserve and utilise to the full every instrument, in Germany and elsewhere, by which the world's wealth can be built up and its distribution fairly planned.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

WOMEN IN HOUSING

SIR,—One would have thought that after the fiasco of the appointment of four men to inquire into conditions in the Women's Services the Government would have been careful to see that there was in future a proper representation of women on committees dealing with matters which primarily concern women. Yet the Minister of Health recently announced the appointment of a sub-committee of the Central Housing Advisory Committee to consider the design of houses and flats which contains only two women out of a total membership of thirteen. One of the two secretaries is a woman.

Not only will the conclusions of the committee affect women far more than men, but, during the inter-war period, women as members of Housing Committees and Advisory Sub-Committees have been continuously concerned with the improvements in the design of houses and flats through the experience of those who live and work in them.

Your readers may remember that when the 1919 housing development started, the Government of that time appointed a committee entirely composed of women under the chairmanship of Lady Emmott to consider the internal planning and fitments of the working-class house. To the recommendations of that committee we owe many improvements which have now been largely adopted by architects all over the country. No one would claim that we have yet reached perfection, but I suggest that if after this war we are to make an advance comparable to that made after the last, women should at least be consulted equally with men in matters which concern them far more closely.

SHENA D. SIMON

EQUALITY OF SACRIFICE

SIR,—I am the Secretary and a Director of a Company with a pay-roll of about 2,500, which is very largely engaged on "war work." My standard of living and those of all my colleagues—measured in entertainment, motor tyres, food, drink, cigars and travelling—have gone down greatly and not gone up. Entertainment and cigars have practically disappeared from my life. I live three miles from my work and three of us living close together take turns at providing transport to and from work. In our business there has not been the slightest relaxation of financial control, even though we are paying E.P.T.

Neither Mr. Davenport nor I can speak for more than that section of the community in which we have to move. I am prepared to publish the name of my Company, my motor car mileage before the war and now, and percentages showing my pre-war and present total income, net income and household expenditure if Mr. Davenport will do the same.

I have no statistics but my eyes. There are people who try to get round restrictions and "wangle" in all classes, just as there are good, bad and indifferent people in all classes. Fouling the family nest is a favourite and easy game of some "Democrats" and I am not going to play it by swopping with Mr. Davenport instances of selfishness in other classes than my own. I may be more fortunate than he is, but I am sure I know more good and unselfish people than bad and selfish ones. As a head warden I have occasionally to remonstrate with someone who is not pulling his weight, and the answer I nearly always get is "Why should I, when so-and-so is doing so little?"

Detailed and instructive criticism is invaluable, but sweeping and ill-founded generalisations that a whole class is at fault, whether it be Directors, Managers or Workers, are mischievous and play the enemy's game, by encouraging the attitude "Why should I?"

G. E. TOULMIN

KARL MARX

SIR,—Why this itch to denigrate Karl Marx?

Raymond Mortimer cannot resist scratching the sore place in his review this week. Is it not possible to appreciate William Morris without sneering at Marx? William Morris would not have thanked him for it.

Marx was a great man. Not "vain," not "envious," not "acrimonious." Anyone who makes such assertions has not read him and does not know him. It seems that Mr. Mortimer is not even aware that outside Goebbels' Europe it is no longer *à la mode* to season literary articles in this way.

45, Fitzroy Road, N.W.1. OLIVE ARNOT

[Marx was indeed so great a man that his reputation will survive even the adulation of worshippers who cannot see that a man may both be great and at the same time often personally disagreeable.—Ed., *N.S. & N.*]

JOHN MAIR

SIR,—As he was a regular contributor to your journal, I feel it is a pity you were not more accurate in your obituary notice of John Mair in your issue of April 14.

He had received his commission and was a pilot officer in the R.A.F. for some few months before he was killed.

The thriller which you state is not yet published was in fact published a year ago by Gollancz under the (now prophetic) title of *Never Come Back* and was much appreciated by the thriller-reading public. Mr. James Agate was enthusiastic about it and chose it as his "Book of the Week." It was subsequently published in America with great success.

One last detail: he was killed over the North Sea and not the Channel, as you stated.

WILFRED PAWLE

[We regret having made these mistakes. The news of John Mair's death did not reach us till we were going to press.—ED. *N.S. & N.*]

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ROBERT HALE

BOOKS IN GENERAL

THERE is no doubt that Stendhal's famous prophecy has been fulfilled. He is better understood and more admired one hundred years after his death than he was during his lifetime. Even if we suspect him—and we ought to suspect one of the more civilised progenitors of Nietzche—he manages to make our suspicions pleasurable. The thing that has saved Stendhal for us is that he is one of those disengaged and egoistic amateurs whose letters, journals, notebooks and sayings are hardly less interesting than the main body of his work. He has the perpetual attraction of the scattered talent. He is a personality, a writer of brilliant beginnings, of remarkable opening poses. The opening pages of any of his novels, when he sits down to destroy our conscience and to startle our intellect with one of his impudent and spacious surveys of history, are irresistible. Our superiority complex leaps up. We are "the happy few," the *âmes généreuses*, the natural intimates of his *élan* and effrontery.

And then Stendhal shares with the other writers who lived through the Revolution, the Napoleonic wars and the disillusion which followed, the advantage of showing us fragments of ourselves or our potential. We live in times so very similar. Are we about to take the same journey through enthusiasm, to withdrawal and the Byronic spleen? Are we already on that journey? We open *La Chartreuse de Parme*:

> On vit que pour être heureux après des siècles d'hypocrisie et de sensations affadissantes, il fallait aimer quelque chose d'une passion réelle, et savoir dans l'occasion exposer sa vie.

But later, Napoleon has compounded and has died. What was left after that enormous and so exciting chemical action? A new money power and democracy—see *Lucien Leuwen*:

> L'argent n'est pas tout pour moi et la démocratie est trop âpre pour ma façon de sentir.

From which it is only a step to the full victory of the spleen:

> L'âme de l'homme est comme un marais infect; si l'on ne passe vite, on s'enfonce.

Too much of the eighteenth century was in Stendhal's bones for him to be happy in the nineteenth, as too much of the nineteenth century has been carried into the twentieth by ourselves. One of Stendhal's erratic wishes was to be buried beside Shelley, and he never forgave Scott his Toryism, but he was one of those heirs of the Revolution whose cultural capital remains invested in the *ancien régime*. He was not alone: the last thing the age of Rousseau thought it was going to produce was the nineteenth century.

A more intimate point of contact lies in the fact that, 100 years after his death, the Romantic movement has come back full circle to autobiography, to personal sensibility and adventure. When society collapses, the self becomes enormously important; and not merely the personal skin (though heaven forbid we should fail to save that), but the feeling that "one head," as Lucien Leuwen thought—and that one, ours—can define the interests of our country and can save it from the rogues. For the last twenty years or more the French and English novel has been dominantly autobiographical. The heirs of the uprooted and vacillating Constant and the guilty Rousseau have come into their own; what we miss in this modern orgy is the echo of Stendhal's contribution. His is an assertion—and this is why it is so inspiriting—not of the soul's sickness, under analysis, nor of the soul in a state of nature, but of the soul's energy. We know that *Le Rouge et le Noir*, *La Chartreuse* and *Lucien Leuwen* are going crash in the end, but when we pick them up we are swept out of ourselves immediately by the pull of a mind which for all its irony puts the highest value on imaginative action. The subject of Stendhal's studies is not failure or frustration: it is the sensibility of success. Action is redeemed from vulgarity, and even from failure, because the imagination and the intellect have secured it. Lucien Leuwen "se livrait au plaisir avec feu; on eut dit un jeune protestant." The thing the heroes of Stendhal fear most is to be stale and conventional sots, to lose a fight from moral scruple, lack of skill or of an imaginative plan. Despite its poses, Byronism did not allow its sense of guilt and doom to paralyse the power to act. And resisting his ennui in the stuffy society of Nancy, Lucien Leuwen reflects:

> Qui n'a pas l'esprit de son âge
> De son âge a tout le malheur.

Stendhal had seen the conquest of Italy: he had also returned from Moscow with the Napoleonic armies. The irony of his disillusion is not lethargic; nor, despite his wonderful gift for spacious reminiscence, is it a nostalgia with tears in the eyes; his irony has a sardonic belligerence. He observes human nature through binoculars, like an artillery officer about to telephone back the range to the guns.

During the past fortnight I have read the two celebrated novels again. Is there anything more superb in nineteenth-century fiction than Stendhal's command of the imaginary court of Parma, in *La Chartreuse*? I have also read *Armance*, his first novel, and *Lucien Leuwen*, his last and posthumous work. Paton, Stendhal's earliest English biographer, thought *Lucien Leuwen* the best of all the novels. Paton makes some sound, practical remarks—"Stendhal began to write novels too late in life"—and also some very foolish ones. It seemed very un-British to Paton, after reading *Le Rouge et Le Noir*, that a young tutor should seduce his employer's wife. *Lucien Leuwen* is the most concentrated of his novels. It is as hard as a diamond. It contains a brilliant picture of post-Napoleonic society in Nancy, seen through the eyes of the usual impossibly disdainful hero. Another bourgeois Swann is amusing himself with the aristocrats. The natural history—as Stendhal would have called it—is more concrete and less musically expressed than in the *Chartreuse*; there is a great deal more dialogue, too, and one is very much struck in this novel by the very modern way in which Stendhal prunes away the foliage of what one calls "literature." Though he made much of the romantic distant view from the window of Fabrice's prison in *La Chartreuse*, and was a connoisseur, almost an archaeologist, of scenery, Stendhal grew to have a repugnance for the vacuum it leaves in the mind; and by the time he wrote *Lucien Leuwen* there is little scenery left. The town is there, a mean little town with its cliques and its sewage. The wretched lancers stand about all day quarrelling in the sun. Occasionally they go off on one of their small, farcical and inglorious campaigns against "the people." In this book, as in the *Le Rouge and Le Noir*, Stendhal anticipates the strict economy of the modern novelist whose intellect has rid him of superfluous material. The same eye for the rewards of cogitative method appears also in his life. On his way to parties Stendhal used to decide in advance how brilliant he could afford to be. He had a plan. It is part of their charm, as well as part of their obnoxiousness, that characters like Julien Sorel and Lucien have their plan. As characters they tire one by their consistency, and one is always irritated by an author who puts overwhelming stress on motives of self-interest and *amour propre*; but, after all, their plan is something which enables them to live intensely. Their plan is really their youth. Stendhal's own egotism, his love of the egotist, made him, I think, the supreme portrayer of young men in the nineteenth century. One wants to kick the conceit out of Lucien, but conceit does not prevent him from experiencing the most elevating and various sentiments of love. The story of Lucien's affair with Mme. de Chastellar is exquisitely related, though, when you analyse it, it is no warmer than a study of the manoeuvres of two wills can be.

Love, in Stendhal, is a duel with rapiers; lovers are entranced by the laws of their own warfare. The more we read Stendhal, the more appropriate the military metaphor seems to be. Stendhal was less the naturalist of the passions than the strategist. He conceived character as the scene of a guerilla war, a civil war, often mean, erratic and comic, often merely a question of vanity and self-interest, but swept from time to time by the larger movements of sensibility and emotion. While Julien Sorel plans his conquest as coldly as a Valmont, tragic battle cleaves Mme. de Rênal's heart. She is surprised by a power to love that she had forgotten since her youth, and is broken by a remorse that neither she nor her lover had supposed to be possible. Both the calculating and the innocent are left in wonder before human passion. And the men, at any rate, are very much aware that their hearts are conditioned by the society in which they live. To the capacities of the heart Stendhal's egotism is almost extravagantly responsive. And here lies the answer to the criticism that Stendhal's psychological analysis is formal, arid and intellectual, a mere enumerating of the types and species begun by Vauvenargues, La Bruyère or La Rochefoucauld. (The hard-faced, squat, toad-like little consul of Civita Vecchia would indeed have liked to pass as a Duclos.) The answer is, Yes, he is rather like this. It is true that vanity is the narrow frame he puts round his picture. But with the difference that the XIXth century, which he found so mediocre, intoxicated him with a sense of movement, an aesthetic thrill of action, unknown to the classical period. He was morally of the eighteenth century; imaginatively he was of the nineteenth. Such a division of nature was bound to lead to that vivid self-consciousness which is one of the private compensations of the exile living in revolutionary times.

V. S. PRITCHETT

A CRITIC IN A THOUSAND

The Wound and the Bow. By EDMUND WILSON. *Secker and Warburg.* 15s.

The subjects of these "seven studies in literature" are Dickens, Kipling, Casanova, Edith Wharton, Hemingway, Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*, and the *Philoctetes* of Sophocles. The title emerges from the last essay and suggests a common theme which the book illustrates rather than develops. Implicit, though unargued, is the notion of worried talents, of conflict stimulating the writer's power of expression; but Dickens, Kipling and Joyce, among the authors discussed, are shown by Mr. Wilson as men with a limp, marooned by the years on islands from which literature provides no return. A similar failure cripples each, though as individuals three writers could hardly be more dissimilar. Dickens in the last stages of popular success, flinging himself into lecture tours, and wooing the public with frenzied representations of the Sykes murder—a performance, up and down the country, from which women were carried out fainting by the score. Kipling, entrenched in Sussex, forgotten like an old music-hall turn, except for occasional letters to the *Times* and Empire poems with druidic leanings. Joyce, three-quarters blind in exile, poring over the universal language which it would take admirers a lifetime to disentangle.

These form the subjects of the longest and most important essays in the book. The essay on Dickens runs a little over a hundred pages. I need hardly say that when Mr. Wilson extends himself on this scale he has good reasons and disinters his material magnificently. His critical perspective, his integrity and what might be called a delving insight make him the most valuable critic alive to-day. Marxism, commonly so fatal to literary discrimination and sound judgment, has provided Mr. Wilson with a sharp awareness of the background to writing; and his use of Freudian psychology, though far more free, is also as a rule discreet. He is not a brilliant or—on the surface—a striking writer; he has ideas and digs down to them, even laboriously; his judgment of literary detail, of a particular book or poem, can be strangely wooden; he rarely—when it comes to making a new judgment—backs the wrong horse, but his right horses

seem sometimes to be running on off-days. Thus in the three studies mentioned his analysis moves step by step, and almost irreproachably, towards the final phase of the writer's work. The climax of critical interest is reached with that last phase, the problems surrounding it, the work produced by it; and in the exhilaration of new findings we may be blinded temporarily to one serious flaw in Mr. Wilson's method. This is that when he is most critically attracted, most absorbed by the psychological problem of the writer he is discussing, he will exalt unreasonably the book or books that throw light on that problem. Dickens's *Edwin Drood*, Kipling's *Limits and Renewals*, Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake* excite Mr. Wilson's admiration because in a sense they are key-books, which in his hands open doors to critical discovery. They are not, however, for that reason better or worse literature; and in one instance —that of Kipling—it is quite plain, as soon as we turn to the original, that the well-worn early Kipling is a floor higher than Mr. Wilson's own especial "Kipling That Nobody Read." Mr. Wilson has dazzled himself, by reading under and over and around Kipling, into believing that the undersized little shrimp of a man with a brilliant and (to some of us) hateful talent concealed a much bigger artist, revealed at last in flashes. Maybe; and doubtless, as Mr. Wilson argues, Kipling was fundamentally defensive and neurotic. But that does not prove that the most neurotic stories are the best; it does not mean necessarily that there is a new "depth" to be found in one or two late pieces and nowhere else. In any case I think that the portrait is overdrawn; having discovered his repressed Kipling, Mr. Wilson lays immense stress on an infernal childhood and seizes every later evasion or arrogance to build a case on. Much, so much, of it is true that we may be convinced so long as we are listening to Mr. Wilson on Kipling and not to Kipling himself. The effect on me was that I turned with a new hope and interest to *A Diversity of Creatures*, *Debits and Credits*, *Limits and Renewals*—and was disappointed. But how many true words Mr. Wilson has let drop by the way about Kipling! The Pre-Raphaelite influence—"Just as the Ballad of *Danny Deever* derives directly from the ballad of *Sister Helen*, so the ideal of an artistic workmanship which shall revert to earlier standards of soundness has the stamp of William Morris and his circle." And again, concerning workmanship, the centre of Kipling as a writer: "It is the paradox of Kipling's career that he should have extended the conquests of his craftsmanship in proportion to the shrinkage of the range of his dramatic imagination. As his responses to human beings became duller, his sensitivity to his medium increased." Laboriously worded perhaps, but the repeated effect of such sentences, which persuade without alluring, is to give one an immense respect for the writer. He may stand and stare, he may make mistakes, but a large portion of what he sets down will be solid truth.

Mr. Wilson's capacity for following a hard trail is seen at its best in the opening essay on Dickens. He says, quite rightly, that Dickens has been abominably served by critics, that those who might have discussed him intelligently gave up reading him at nineteen and never returned, while the field is left open to beery revivalists and the English equivalent of the Burns bore. Gissing, Chesterton and Shaw are among the few critics for whom he has a good word. It is no accident that the first of these should have possessed a temperament remote from what we have come to mean by the adjective "Dickensian." Exuberant fun is, of course, a leading trait of almost any Dickens novel, but there is much oddity too, much spleen and a pre-occupation with violence that reaches at times beyond melodrama. Strindberg was a great admirer of Dickens; there are scenes in *The Spook Sonata* and *The Old Curiosity Shop* that could be swapped without incongruity. Mr. Wilson is the first critic (to my knowledge) to do justice to the uneasy Dickens, to trace conflict behind a brilliant restlessness of creation. Indeed, so intent is Mr. Wilson on bringing out an "English Dostoevsky," that he almost brushes aside the Victorian puppet-master everyone enjoys. That is the chief criticism one can make of an essay as original and satisfying as any Mr. Wilson has written. He allows himself space to give a full account of Dickens's struggles; the blacking factory, the prison, the shadow of his father, the gross exaggerations, the pre-occupation with murder, the equivocal social status, and the instincts for reform take their place for the first time in an intelligible order. As with Kipling, it is the last phase—drama in the novels breaking through melodrama, hysteria reaching its climax—that particularly engrosses Mr. Wilson. He is not, here, building up a case, but making valuable discoveries. His analysis of *Edwin Drood*, a book doomed to failure because too long delayed, is masterly. The whole portrait, in fact, is so convincing that readers who have never begun with Dickens or have stuffed him away into the past will feel themselves bound to re-read. The two books especially recommended by Mr. Wilson—and memory supports him—are *Bleak House* and *Our Mutual Friend*.

The third essay already mentioned—on *Finnegan's Wake*—makes discoveries where discovery is certainly needed. Joyce's last book, which took seventeen years of writing, represents the top story of an ivory tower in which even the lower rooms are somewhat forbidding. Mr. Wilson has succeeded where others have failed, and experienced the triumph of reaching that last sentence which can only be completed by starting again on page 1. He has dug out a story, a situation, solid characters which are (to put it mildly) not obvious to such stray revellers in Joyce's dream-book as myself. These signposts provided by Mr. Wilson are useful, indispensable even; and here, as always, his criticism is infectious. He admits all the faults—the muddle, the pointless encyclopædism and solemn joking—and underlines the good. Four versions, it seems, exist of some passages in *Finnegan's Wake* representing four stages in the book's development—each of course more complex than the last. Mr. Wilson quotes an example from the lovely "Anna Livia" section and makes the interesting criticism that Joyce's composition should have stopped somewhere between the second and third versions. He admits, though, that the final version gains in poetry what it loses in outline; and there, it seems to me, is the point. For surely, without that added poetry, no one would find this monstrous creation worth skimming or puzzling over at all? I have been re-reading *Finnegan's Wake*, as the result of Mr. Wilson's guidance, enjoying again some passages I knew already, discovering others, and it seems to me that in the mad, moony, magic and high jinks that float off unintelligibility is the particular virtue of Joyce's book. It is a book for trance reading, for those who delight in words as such and in their capacity for subconscious echo. Mr. MacCarthy's description of the mood that produced *Ulysses*, "a morose delectation in dirt," seemed partial and unfair, and it certainly does not apply to *Finnegan's Wake*. It may not be—almost certainly is not—a masterpiece, but it has its staggering successes, and buried in oceans of wool there is a wealth of poetry and fun.

The remaining essays deal, more briefly, with Casanova, Edith Wharton, and Hemingway. The first takes the right line by raising Casanova out of roguery into literature, but does not get far. I can't judge the second; I have read only one novel by Edith Wharton and she seems to me only a minor figure in the James constellation. The Hemingway piece is a gem. One can't think of much to say about Hemingway after reading Mr. Wilson. Most of his criticism starts the reader on journeys which will keep him going for weeks; but this essay on Hemingway shuts the door and turns the key in the lock.

G. W. STONIER

THE TANGLE IN PALESTINE

Palestine: A Policy. By ALBERT M. HYAMSON. With a foreword by SIR RONALD STORRS. *Methuen.* 7s.

The string in Palestine has got into one of those exasperating human tangles which it seems to be absolutely impossible to straighten out, yet one feels that if human beings had even the minutest quantity of sweet reasonableness, the tangle would not exist at all. It is, too, one of those racial tangles which is emotionally so exasperating that hardly any one manages to be reasonable and impartial about it, and judge and jury become as heatedly biased as the disputants. It is, therefore, remarkable that Mr. Hyamson, who is a Jew, should have written a book of scrupulous impartiality, and that if any one charges him with bias, it will not be the Arabs, but the Jews. His book, which is short and clear, never beats about the bush. He gives first the history of Zionism and of Palestine since the war of 1914, and then his own solution of the problem.

The problem, though it is now hidden under a mountain of Jewish-Arab controversy, is in itself a simple one. In the Mandate there are two promises, one to the Jews and the other to the Arabs, created by two obligations undertaken by the Mandatory Power. The Jews are promised the "establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people"; the Arabs are promised that nothing will be done "which might prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine." The meaning of these promises—and therefore the effect of carrying them out—clearly depends upon the interpretation of the words "National Home for the Jewish people" and "the civil and religious rights" of the Palestinian Arabs. The Zionists, or many of them, maintain that a National Home implies the right of unrestricted immigration into Palestine with the corollary that in the future there will or may be a majority of Jews over Arabs in that country, and therefore a "Jewish State." The Arabs maintain unanimously that included in the existing civil rights of the Arabs is the right to preserve their majority in the population, and therefore to restrict Jewish immigration so as to prevent for all time the creation of a Jewish majority and a Jewish State.

Mr. Hyamson's account of the genesis of these promises and of the variety of interpretations since given to them is, on the whole, admirable. His own sympathies are clearly with the Jewish "moderates" and with the interpretation of the National Home as a cultural rather than a political home; he stands therefore with Ahad Ha'Am rather than with Dr. Weizmann. Whether the British Government meant to promise that kind of National Home in the Balfour Declaration and the Mandate, or, if not, what kind of National Home they did intend to give the Jews, it is now practically impossible to determine, partly because the truth is obscured by that great mountain of controversy, and partly because the promisers were from the first none too comfortable and not, therefore, anxious to make it absolutely clear to Jew, Arab, or indeed themselves, what they were promising. It is significant, as Mr. Hyamson insists, that the British Government promised only "to facilitate the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish People," whereas what the Zionists had asked for was "the reconstitution of Palestine as the National Home of the Jewish People," and this may be read as evidence that the Government rejected the Zionist claims *ab initio*. On the other hand, Mr. Hyamson does not put the Zionist case quite as strongly as it might be put. For if Palestine is to be a place to which Jews are not allowed to go and which is to be reserved for all eternity as the National Home of Arabs, the Jew is not altogether unreasonable if he complains that Palestine as *his* National Home will suffer from two defects, namely, that it is neither a home nor national.

But what was originally meant by the promise is now an academic question. The important

thing to-day is what interpretation the Jews and Arabs have been allowed to put on the promises. And the dominating fact in the tangle is that the promises as they are interpreted now by Jews and Arabs cannot be reconciled. A promise to preserve a political majority to the Arabs in Palestine simply is not consistent with a promise to ensure conditions for the Jews which may enable them to become the political majority. The only possible solution of the problem is to begin all over again and to aim at establishing a regime in Palestine which will do the least injustice to both the Arabs and the Jews. That is what Mr. Hyamson's solution aims at. If it were adopted, the Jews would be much more disappointed than the Arabs, but it is doubtful whether under present circumstances this is not inevitable. The crucial point remains immigration. Mr. Hyamson's plan would limit immigration; on the other hand it would give the Jews "a Jewish community of an adequate size, both absolutely and relatively," and the State would be "Palestinian," not Arab or Jewish. But again the Jewish community must not be of a size to "threaten the position of the Arabs." The wording is tactful, but the significance is clear. It is probable that the tangle can be unravelled only in some such way as this. Given a reasonable limitation of immigration, and a cautious but honest attempt to create a bi-national State, it is possible that the fears and passions of the two communities may die down, in which case some of the difficulties in the way of making Palestine a real National Home for the Jews, now insoluble, would vanish. Mr. Hyamson is probably right in thinking that the inclusion of Palestine in a federation of Middle East states would ease the situation and facilitate a settlement.

LEONARD WOOLF

THE ARMY

Bless 'Em All—The Morale, Efficiency and Leadership of the British Army. By BOOMERANG. *Secker & Warburg.* 1s. 6d.

A salutary, slashing, high-spirited attack on conventionalism in the Army; three-quarters justified, one quarter—well, frankly, silly. It's a pity about that last quarter, because anyone who defends the book will soon find some quite indefensible passage hurled at his head. To forestall criticism, I enumerate a few: (1) *Boots* (p. 26). Army boots are of admirable quality and very comfortable when worn in. (2) *Fatigues* (p. 41). The author constantly complains of the frustration of unskilled labour—"peeling potatoes, digging trenches, scrubbing floors, and cleaning rooms." Boring, of course; but who else is to do this work on a lonely gun site? And who, I wonder, does the charring for the Red Army or the Reichswehr? (3) *ABCA* (p. 23). A sneer at the Army Bureau of Current Affairs for its "lectures" is the feeblest thing in the book. ABCA, though its success depends ultimately on the quality of the subaltern handling it on the site, does a brilliant job; its bulletins could hardly be better, and almost every one of them contains a warning against "lecturing."

Leaving aside such vagaries, one recognises in the author (an A.A. gunner, like myself) an outlook uncommonly fresh and unbiased. "Boomerang" is not, thank heaven, that familiar bird, the Left-wing Army critic, who thinks our fiendish enemies can be destroyed by a band of gallant non-saluting democrats with Wintringhams in their haversacks and all manner of excellent peace aims on their lips. Courageous and unconventional, he sees a great many things that few people care to admit. He sees that, to win a total war, you have to mobilise vicious qualities as well as virtuous. Self-control, endurance, valour—it is of course the virtues which make the headlines; but on them alone no army could advance an inch. We also need, unfortunately, a few of the vices: among them hatred, callousness, brutality, cunning, suspicion. In war, nobility, like patriotism, is not enough. Faced with a sticky hand-to-hand fight, the farthest the "good citizen" can go is: "I do this because I must, but I don't like it." However technically efficient, however convinced of his "cause," he starts at a disadvantage compared with the ugly customer who finds peace frankly dull and always joins instinctively in any pub brawl that may be going. The author glances at this neglected point of view when he writes: "The best man to fight a Fascist is a rival Fascist, just as the best answer to a tank is another tank."

That sentence occurs in a highly original chapter on the selection of officers. Broadly speaking, the author's view is: Gad sir, Col. Bingham was right. It *is* dead right to give commissions to "Old Etonians" (by which term he means products of any "good" public school). Why? Because, except for intelligence, imagination and technical efficiency, they have *all* the requisite qualities. He even admits, with marvellous honesty, that the famous question, "Do you hunt?" is not wholly irrelevant. "Cruel blood sports are obviously ideal training for war, which is the cruellest and bloodiest sport of all: the English aristocrat's delight in killing animals gives him the best possible preparation for killing Nazis." But the exceptions mentioned above, though not so overriding as the Left suppose, do leave an awkward gap. Besides, as can be seen by a glance round any hotel lounge, the supply of "Old Etonians" has long since run out. The War Office, faced with this situation, plumps for the imitation Old Etonian: grammar school, provincial university, insurance office, suburb. This is where the author (like poor Col. Bingham) joins issue with the authorities. By and large, he says, these make the feeblest subalterns; more intelligent, it is true, than the Old Etonians, they are cautious, drab, uninspiring, and generally too scared to say bo to a major. The officer who *never* says "What the hell!" and gets on with the job in his own sweet way is seldom a good officer. Qualities lacked by Old Etonians must be supplied by officers drawn from other sources: scientific, industrial, and (the author slyly adds) criminal.

The rest of the book will find more favour with the orthodox Left. Its general criticism of the Army boils down to a complaint, difficult to refute, that by attempting to make out of civilian conscripts an Army of imitation old-style regulars it merely gets the worst of both worlds.

> The regular soldier has joined the Army because he likes fighting in general, not because he wants to fight anybody in particular. But the present-day conscript has no delight in fighting for itself: make him forget what this war is about and you deprive him of the only driving force which can make him a good soldier.

Space is short, and I can touch on only one more point.

> The Navy and the Air Force are not funny. The Army is. You can't help laughing. When Low created his great comic character, he christened him Colonel Blimp: it would have been unthinkable to call him Admiral Blimp or Wing-Commander Blimp.

It is horribly true that the British Army is a joke to itself. "Read *Punch* and you will find dozens of delightful contributions written by Army officers who smile at their own mistakes, giggle and guffaw at Army incompetence, and tilt gently at Army Red Tape." In this war the famous British "sense of humour," like Time, is quite as much on the enemy's side as on our own. How familiar, after an exercise planned at great expense and ingenuity to simulate the real thing, is the cheerful "Absolute shambles, old boy" over the evening whisky in the mess. That is where "Boomerang's" criminals and scientists come

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HAMISH HAMILTON

in; neither class would dream of planning an experiment or a haul with such happy incompetence. He might, here and elsewhere, have pushed his analysis further: the faults of the Army only mirror the faults of our society as a whole, and it is not in the mess alone that ignorance, complacency and indifference have been so long the fashion. But we are learning, within the Army as well as outside; what with Russia and Malay and Burma, Englishmen are shaking off the queer dream in which they have lived for so long, and catching up, sometimes at the rate of a decade a month, with the world of 1942.

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Diagnosis: Murder. By RUFUS KING. *Methuen* 8*s.*

Slocombe Dies. By L. A. G. STRONG. *Collins.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

In the heyday of the Week-End Book people used to play "Murder" as a parlour game, with scope for a rough-and-tumble in the dark. A detective was chosen and left the room; the rest decided on a murderer and a victim; the lights were turned out; the murderer sought out the victim in darkness and complete silence, and caught hold of the throat to signify the murder. At that, the victim screamed, everyone scuttled, and half a minute later the detective opened the door and turned up the lights. The rules were that everyone but the murderer had to answer the detective's questions truthfully as regards their movements; and the theory was that truth would out, as the murderer's statements would not tally with the rest. In my experience the theory did not work out, as nobody's statements tallied; but there was plenty of fun until the lights went up. In *Design for Murder* ten of the idle rich of America play the "Murder" game with variations, the most effective variation being actual murder.' Mr. Percival Wilde, who is a playwright-cum-novelist, showed consummate ability for detection writing in his first two works, *Mystery Weekend* and *Inquest*; and this story will sustain his reputation. The characters are not emphasised, but nicely contrasted; the narrative is distributed between the personal records of four of the survivors (the American technique of approach from different "angles"); the speed and timing are judged to a nicety; while the plot is sound and almost plausible. One single clue is given you. You can't miss it; only you may not have the patience to unravel it, as Mr. Wilde sees to it that the reader is too excited and impatient at that stage to stop and think—very fair but very cunning tactics. *Design for Murder* would be flawless except for one utter impossibility, of no great importance, which could easily have been avoided by a little re-writing. One might overlook this carelessness, only Mr. Wilde particularly criticises Conan Doyle for similar inadvertences.

What was a yellow New York taxi doing, crawling about the wilds of New Hampshire and frightening the life out of red-headed society girls? Dr. Westlake, our old friend, finds the answer to that riddle easily enough; but he has to perform some heroic gymnastics and nearly earns a hearse himself before he realises why death follows the taxi. His daughter Dawn, our twelve-year-old enemy, gets a pair of skis, a bowl of goldfish and a ship-in-bottle as a reward for her contribution to the solution of *Call A Hearse*. This is the fifth of the Dr. Westlake series, taken at Jonathan Stagge's leisurely stride, with plenty of action and the heavy crop of suspects that a large, complicated family always produces. It is the best story Jonathan Stagge has yet written.

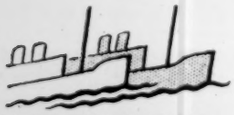
In *The Broken Vase* Tecumseh Fox makes his second appearance for Mr. Rex Stout, but is not nearly as bright or brisk as he was in *Double for Death*. The story opens superbly. A young violinist of genius, making his début in New York with a Stradivarius violin, fails to extract any respectable sound from it: half-way through the fiasco he commits suicide. After this death by violin, another young man swigs off cyanide instead of bourbon, and Tec Fox ought to get busy. But Mr. Stout does not give him enough difficulties to overcome, so he has to potter along to his solution, long after the shape of the villain has materialised to an observant eye. Mr. Stout always writes well, but *The Broken Vase* does not grip the reader as it should.

Ellery Queen has long been reported Missing, Believed Prisoner of War at Hollywood, but this new book proves that he is still at large, if somewhat debilitated. With advancing years Ellery has become verbose, sentimental and self-satisfied. These characteristics predominate in *Calamity Town* almost to the exclusion of detection. After a lot of preliminary small-talk in an American small-town, a young man is gaoled for the murder of a woman. *Ex hypothesi* he must be innocent, but he refuses to put up any defence. Why? Ellery, with a great air of condescension, snoops smugly around to find out. Not a difficult case, and not a feather in Ellery's cap, but for old times' sake many may like to read the book. For the younger generation, let them read *The Dutch Shoe* or *The Roman Hat* if they want to see what Ellery could do in his prime.

As regularly as the equinoxes, indefatigable Asey Mayo obliges the public twice a year. *The Perennial Boarder* is one of the worst tangles that ever encumbered Cape Cod. On top of the permanent inhabitants and the tourists come the Army and a repertory theatre. Asey, delivering clams for Cousin Jennie to a deserted hotel, hears the telephone ring and finds a slumped body in the telephone booth. Then someone kicks over the bucket of clams in the porch, and by the time Asey has failed to locate the kicker, the body has vanished. Up and down the peninsula the plot thickens to the consistency of pea soup. By the finish, when Asey claims to explain everything, the reader will be so exhausted that he won't mind what the explanation is, provided the case is declared closed.

Diagnosis: Murder contains six short stories and one half-length novel, launching Dr. Colin Starr on his detective career in a small Middle West community. The clues he works on are naturally medical; and his methods an agreeable blend of scientific knowledge and disarming *bonhomie*. Mr. Rufus King has already written several full-length detective stories of considerable merit, and his terse style is admirably suited to condensed crime. The longest story, *The Lonely Ladies*, is enriched with lavish sentiment and blood-curdling suspense.

Mr. L. A. G. Strong is a well-known novelist, stooping to crime. *Slocombe Dies* is not proper detection, but the elucidation of a dramatic *rencontre*. Topping the rise of a Dartmoor hill in his car, a detective novelist sees ten yards in front on the road: a man lying tied up with rope, with his head bashed in; a younger man in a furious temper undoing the rope; a girl in hysterics by the wayside, being despised by the young man; and a moment later another girl casually strolling up with the remark, "Did he



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get him?" followed by the more cryptic utterance, "It began with the tripe." A pretty challenge to a detective novelist! Mr. Strong explains it all by character analysis, the characters proving to be of that clear-cut, passionate, misunderstood type which populates Wessex in Thomas Hardy's mind but is not recognised by the local inhabitants. I found *Slocombe Dies* interesting but not impressive.

RALPH PARTRIDGE

Week-end Competitions

No. 637

Set by Thomas Lowinsky

What answer Dr. Livingstone made to Stanley's famous remark is, I believe, unknown; and other celebrated meetings have been inadequately recorded. The usual prizes are offered for the opening remarks of both persons at any three of the following encounters: Adam and Eve; Europa and the Bull; Henry VIII. and Anne of Cleves; Voltaire and Frederick the Great; Mme. de Pompadour and Boucher; Talleyrand and the Duke of Wellington; Byron and Shelley; Queen Victoria and the Empress Eugénie; Whistler and Wilde.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, April 27th.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 634

Set by Kingsley Martin

A few years ago the newspapers reported the case of a woman shot through the head by her husband. He put a notice on the door of her room instructing the next visitor to call the police and then went into the garden and shot himself. "Why," asked a friend in surprise, "did he do that?" "I suppose," I said, "he wouldn't be seen dead with her."

The usual prizes are offered for the best similar example of an incident and comment which gives life and significance to a stock phrase.

Report by Kingsley Martin

Not many entrants succeeded in producing replies that were really fresh, spontaneous and within the terms of the competition. Some efforts were much too laboured: the entrant thought of an idiom, then found an unconvincing story to go with it. The essential element of surprise is missing from a story of a sailor tripping over a bucket on the quayside and getting drowned, and finishing with the reflection that "he has kicked the bucket." It was much nearer the mark, but still too far-fetched for a coroner to comment on the death of a drunken window-cleaner who fell from a sixth-floor window that "he had had a drop too much." Again, I rule out mere jokes such as the following:

W. S. Gilbert wanted to speak to Miss ——, a prima-donna of somewhat generous proportions, and asked an official if he had seen her. "Yes," was the reply, "she's round behind." "I know," said Gilbert, "but where is she?" (N. B.)

Or again there were witticisms such as that based on the point that Mr. Chamberlain's umbrella became a national joke, which was "carried too far" when it went to Munich. Into the same category I put:

That Prometheus, a man who once set the world on fire, should have undergone his appalling captivity so passively is obviously due to his lack of guts. (Stephen Tait)

Again, there were a few chestnuts, such as the conversation about the man who gassed himself:

"I should have thought that was the last thing he would have done." "It was." (O. Y. Bell)

Better, but also too obvious, is the story claimed, I am sure correctly, to be authentic of the boy who loitered with a wreath so much on the way to the ceremony that he was literally "too late for a funeral."

Much better is the story of the lawyer who was drawing up a will and a marriage settlement at the same time, and finding that he was going off with the wrong paper, apologised for "taking the will for the deed." The same contributor, Mr. Leslie Johnson, has an ingenious story in which he asked in a visit of condolence how it had been possible to have pushed all the ashes of the deceased into a small urn. "Oh," said the bereaved relative, "they made no bones about it." From Transport House, where witticisms perhaps flourish more than the outside world imagines, there comes a recent incident in which a well-known Labour Party organiser described how her house at one time had been used for printing in the basement, with literature stacked in the hall and sometimes several committees meeting simultaneously in different rooms; to which a well-known M.P. remarked: "But yours was the kind of house that *lent* itself." Mr. Sam Platts contributes a story which could, I believe, have been much better told. He declares that in the middle of an air raid he looked out of the window and saw his neighbour, who had been blown from his bed through the window, "standing desolately in Acacia Avenue, making the most of a short night-shirt. 'Why,' asked my wife, 'is Mr. Simkins standing there without his clothes?' 'Don't be foolish, my dear. You have long known who wears the trousers in that household.'"

The best entries are usually the authentic ones. A. P-R. describes a party motoring towards the Rockies, with the present Chinese Ambassador in Washington, the erudite and famous Mr. Hu Shih:

For some while they were blocked by an enormous haulage-van (or pantechnicon, don't-you-call-it), which seemed out of place in more ways than one. With difficulty they horned it aside, and as they passed all caught the glaring address of the company on its flank. It came from Charleston Carolina, or somewhere equally absurdly remote. All were surprised and laughed. "Yes," said Hu Shih gravely, "it's carrying things too far."

Simple, but, I think, precisely fulfilling the terms of this competition is B.T.'s story of arriving in court to find that the prisoner, feeling faint, had been allowed to sit down:

"Why is he sitting?" I whispered to a colleague.

"He hasn't a leg to stand on," he replied.

Towanbucket, H. W. Y. and Mrs. Cornford seem to me the best out of a not very brilliant batch.

PRIZES

I

It may be remembered that some years ago, in a small South Coast town, a 72-year old man named Simon Palliser outraged all the canons of self-slaughter by shooting himself in the dark. At the inquest a witness, in answer to a question, said he thought the old man was tired of life, adding (with an obviously unintentional fitness): "I think he came to the conclusion that the game was not worth the candle."

TOWANBUCKET

II

We were at Chenonceaux, during an "educational" visit to Touraine, before the war. "Wasn't it funny, Daddy," my daughter asked, "that Diane de Poitiers was Henri II's mistress as well as François I's?"

"I suppose he felt," I answered, "What was good enough for my father is good enough for me."

H. W. Y.

III

My father told me: A friend of mine was dining at the French Embassy, where the then Shah of Persia was the guest of the evening. When the Shah rose to make a speech after dinner, he seemed to find some difficulty in keeping his feet and speaking distinctly. My friend's neighbour remarked: *La nuit tous les chats sont gris.*

MRS. F. M. CORNFORD

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Ordinary Branch: Bonus of £1 per cent. for 1939, 1940 and 1941 declared on participating policies which become claims during the ensuing year. Surplus carried forward is £1,838,284.

Industrial Branch: £419,926 Profits allocated to Policyholders.

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